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INTEGRATION OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

by

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Special operations forces (SOF) and conventional forces (hereafter referred to as general purpose forces of GPF) frequently operate together under a unified chain of command. When they do, conventional wisdom places SOF in command. In unconventional warfare operations, however, this subordination of SOF to GPF may hinder the ability of the integrated force to design an appropriate solution.

This thesis examines the integration of SOF and GPF in unconventional warfare (UW) from an organizational perspective. It begins by examining the unique challenges posed by UW problems and establishing the organizational culture and functional specialization of SOF and GPF. It posits that SOF is, from an organizational perspective, better suited to designing solutions to UW problems than GPF. It further posits that by subordinating SOF to GPF the likelihood of the integrated force designing a campaign strategy appropriate for a UW problem is greatly reduced. It then uses the US involvement in Vietnam to test these hypotheses. The thesis concludes that organizational factors do, in fact, play a role in the formation of strategy, and that careful consideration of the command relationships in future unconventional warfare operations is warranted.

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INTEGRATION OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

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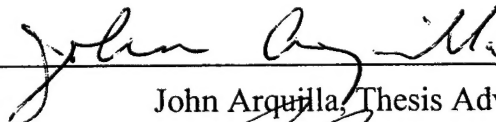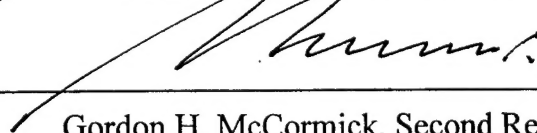
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ABSTRACT

Special operations forces (SOF) and conventional forces (hereafter referred to as general purpose forces or GPF) frequently operate together under a unified chain of command. When they do, conventional wisdom places GPF in command. In unconventional warfare operations, however, this subordination of SOF to GPF may hinder the ability of the integrated force to design and implement an appropriate solution.

This thesis examines the integration of SOF and GPF in unconventional warfare (UW) from an organizational perspective. It begins by examining the unique challenges posed by UW problems and establishing the organizational culture and functional specialization of SOF and GPF. It posits that SOF is, from an organizational perspective, better suited to designing solutions to UW problems than GPF. It further posits that by subordinating SOF to GPF the likelihood of the integrated force designing a campaign strategy appropriate for a UW problem is greatly reduced. It then uses the US involvement in Vietnam to test these hypotheses. The thesis concludes that organizational factors do, in fact, play a role in the formation of strategy, and that careful consideration of the command relationships in future unconventional warfare operations is warranted.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Military Victories are not gained by a single arm--though the failure of any arm or Service might well be disastrous--but are achieved through the efforts of all arms and Services welded into ...[a] team.

--George Marshall[1]

A. BACKGROUND

As the above statement by General Marshall points out, the United States has long been interested in integrating service capabilities in war. In recent years, the emphasis on integration has grown even stronger. Since 1990, the Joint Staff has produced 107 joint doctrinal manuals which provide authoritative guidance for integrating service capabilities and conducting joint operations. Joint Pub 1, <u>Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces</u>, is entirely dedicated to emphasizing the tradition and importance of service integration. Additionally, joint assignments have become a virtual necessity for career progression and promotion to the highest ranks for officers of all services.

In spite of this increased emphasis on integration, however, operations conducted by special operations forces (SOF) and those conducted by conventional forces (here after referred to as general purpose forces or GPF) are often

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[1] George Marshall, speech to the Air Corps Tactical School, 19 September, 1938.

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perceived as separate and distinct. There is a tendency to think of SOF only as elite commandos who perform daring raids and hostage rescues of the type made famous by the Israelis at Entebbe. They are often perceived as responding directly to the president and the national command authority and having little to do with more traditional army, navy, and air force units.

While it is true that these missions are occasionally performed by SOF acting unilaterally and that these missions are one reason for maintaining an organizationally distinct SOF, they do not represent the "lion's share" of SOF operations.[2] The reality is that most SOF operations and missions are not conducted unilaterally, but rather are integrated with GPF. One could even argue that almost all operations conducted by SOF are integrated with GPF at either the tactical, operational, or strategic level of warfare.

Thus, integration occurs not only between military services, but between various types of military forces as well. It is this latter type of integration, and

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[2] For a complete treatment of the reasons for maintaining an organizationally distinct SOF, see Eliot A Cohen, Commandos and Politicians: Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies, (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1978), Chapter 2, pp. 29-52.

specifically the integration of SOF and GPF, with which this study is concerned.

1. Integrated Operations Defined

For purposes of this study, the term integrated operations will refer to those operations involving both SOF and GPF working together to accomplish a task. Integrated operations are defined, then, as operations which involve both SOF and GPF *working together under a unified command and control structure* to accomplish a specific mission or conduct a campaign. It is useful to note that integrated operations can be, and usually are, joint as well.

2. The Scope of Integration

Integrated operations can, and do, occur across the entire spectrum of conflict, from peacetime contingency operations to high intensity conventional war. Recent humanitarian operations in Somalia and Rwanda are examples of integrated operations at the low end of the spectrum, and the Persian Gulf War is an example at the high end.

Integration can also be thought of as occurring at two basic levels, referred to here as the tactical and the strategic. At the tactical level, integration is fundamentally a process of planning and conducting

operations in pursuit of an established campaign strategy. At the strategic level, integration consists of the process through which a particular campaign strategy is decided upon. Tactical integration can be thought of as the process of planning and executing a single mission. Strategic integration, on the other hand, can be thought of as the process of deciding upon the type of missions to be executed and the way in which they are choreographed to accomplish the larger goals of policy. An example from Operation Just Cause may help to clarify these concepts.

In Operation Just Cause, the planning and execution of the airfield seizure mission at Torrijos Tocumen and the follow-on introduction of GPF combat forces is an example of tactical integration. SOF and GPF worked together under the unified command and control of the XVIII Airborne Corps, acting as the JTF headquarters, to accomplish their assigned missions in pursuit of the overall campaign plan. The way in which SOF and GPF organizations worked together to design the campaign plan, within the unified command and control framework of United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), is an example of strategic integration.

B. PURPOSE

Despite the fact that integration of SOF and GPF is a common characteristic of Department of Defense (DOD) operations, little scholarly attention has been devoted to the subject. Although the interest in special operations and special operations forces has grown significantly in recent years, most of the literature has focused either on historical narrative of specific operations and units, or high-level political considerations associated with the existence and use of SOF organizations.[3] While these works contain some valuable insights into the integration process, little effort has been made at developing a comprehensive, analytical understanding of that process. What little work has been done concerning integration has focused mostly on the tactical level in predominantly conventional conflicts.[4] The purpose of this study is to go beyond the work that has already been done and closely examine the process of integration at the strategic level in

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[3] For a more detailed review of recent literature on special operations and special operations forces see John Arquilla, From Troy to Entebbe: Literary and Historical Perspectives on Special Operations, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), p. xiii.

[4] See Captain Michael M. Kershaw, The Integration of Special Operations and General Purpose Forces, Masters Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 1994 for an analysis of the integration process in short duration, conventional strike missions.

operations that fall outside the conventional warfare region of the spectrum of conflict.

C. WHY UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

There are two primary reasons for studying integration in unconventional warfare. First, national interests have in the past and will in the future continue to demand that the U.S. military become involved in unconventional warfare. In the early stages of the cold war, when Premier Khrushchev promised Soviet support for unconventional "wars of national liberation,"[5] the American strategy of containment made confronting such wars a necessity. Similarly, the rise of terrorist activity in the late 1970s and early 1980s presented the United States with a new threat that was not very susceptible to a conventional military response. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war have brought no respite from unconventional threats and conflicts. In fact, just the opposite seems to be true. Since 1989 the United States has fought one middle intensity war, but has also deployed forces on humanitarian operations to Somalia, Rwanda, and several other locations; engaged in

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[5] Cited in Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977) p. 456.

limited combat operations in Somalia; and currently has troops deployed on various types of nation building and peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Bosnia. These operations all represent cases in which the perceived interests of the United States have required a military response short of conventional war, and all have involved both SOF and GPF to one degree or another.

The second, and perhaps more compelling, reason for examining integration in unconventional warfare is that this type of warfare has long been perceived as a soft spot in America's armor. Both politicians and academics have expressed this sentiment. President Kennedy, for example, who had a personal fascination with guerrilla warfare, felt the U.S. military was ill-prepared to deal with the prospect of confronting communist backed insurgencies.[6] This was evidenced by his assertion in 1962 that unconventional warfare required "a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training."[7] Members of Congress have also perceived the U.S. unconventional capability as

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[6] Ibid., p. 456. See also Andrew Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 27-33.

[7] Ibid., p. 457.

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being weak. On May 15, 1986, Senator William S. Cohen (R-Maine) expressed a widespread, bipartisan, congressional concern when he stated "a new form of warfare has emerged in recent years, a form of warfare we have not properly understood, and that we have not effectively deterred."[8] On the academic side, Loren B. Thompson, deputy director of the National Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, asserted in 1989 that "[o]ne characteristic of low-intensity conflict that has become all too clear recently is that when the United States is drawn into such warfare, it usually performs poorly."[9]

Unfortunately, there is no shortage of evidence to back up these assertions by the politicians and academics. The U.S. failure in Vietnam is, of course, the most obvious. However, recent difficulties in Somalia and, to a lesser degree, Haiti, seem to indicate that there is still much room for improvement, and a better integration of SOF and GPF and an understanding of the organizational factors which influence the development of strategy may be a significant first step.

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[8] Senator William S. Cohen, Congressional Record, May 15, 1986.
[9] Loren B. Thompson, ed. Low-Intensity Conflict: The Pattern of Warfare in the Modern World, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989) pp. ix.

D. THE PROBLEM

One reason for poor performance in unconventional warfare may be the way in which integration of SOF and GPF takes place. When integration occurs, conventional wisdom calls for the placement of SOF in support of GPF. In a recent statement to the Senate Committee on Armed Services General Wayne Downing, Commander in Chief (CINC) of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), stated:

> Special operations may be performed during periods of peace or war to support conventional operations or as independent operations when the use of conventional forces is either inappropriate or infeasible.[10]

Little consideration seems to be given by either community to the idea of GPF supporting SOF. This may seem like a trivial distinction or a matter of semantics, but careful consideration reveals otherwise, particularly at the strategic level of integration in operations that fall outside the conventional warfare area of the spectrum of conflict.

SOF became a permanent part of the force structure in the late 1950s. Since that time, as a result of their

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[10] Taken from the transcript of the statement of General Wayne A. Downing, Commander in Chief, United States Special Operations Command, before the Senate Committee on Armed Services given in February, 1995, p. 1.

mission profile, they have developed along organizationally distinct lines within DOD. They have specialized in different tasks and missions and, as a result, have developed a different organizational culture than GPF.[11] SOF, for example, typically operate in small units designed for independent action, are regionally oriented, strive to maintain language and cultural skills, and operate using a theory of relative superiority which relies heavily on intelligence and is often associated with the minimum use of force.[12] GPF, on the other hand, tend to operate in large units, have world-wide responsibilities, and prefer to operate using a theory of overwhelming force.

Organization theory suggests these differences in functional specialization and organizational culture may influence both the way in which SOF and GPF perceive problems, and their preferences for solutions. Thus, when the two forces operate together, the nature of the strategic solution, or campaign plan, the integrated force adopts may

[11] Within organization theory there are several definitions for the term "organizational culture." While there are subtle differences which organization theorists might argue about, for purposes of this study it is sufficient to define organizational culture as a set of important understandings, beliefs, and patterns of behavior, often unstated, that members of an organization share in common. For a more complete discussion of organizational culture, see Lisa A Mainiero and Cheryl L. Tromley, Developing Managerial Skills in Organizational Behavior, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1989).

[12] For a complete treatment of the theory of relative superiority in special operations see William McRaven, SPEC OPS: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice, (Novato, CA, Presidio Press, 1995), Chapter 1, pp. 1-25.

depend substantially on which organization is in charge. One might expect that when GPF are in charge, the strategic solution would reflect their preference for overwhelming force and emphasis on maneuver warfare. Conversely, when SOF are in charge, one might expect to see solutions which reflect a less robust use of force, a greater reliance on intelligence, and application of psyops and civil affairs campaigns directed specifically at the local population.

Under the current unified command plan, when integrated operations take place, SOF are virtually always subordinate to a GPF organization. This subordination usually takes the form of a JTF headquarters commanded by a conventional organization.[13] This subordination occurs in both conventional operations such as Desert Shield/Desert Storm, as well as more unconventional operations such as Vietnam, Somalia, and Haiti. In conventional operations this subordination is appropriate because both the functional specialization and organizational culture of GPF are a "good match" for the task at hand. GPF are well suited to developing effective campaign plans and strategic solutions

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[13] For a complete description of the doctrinal command relationships for SOF operating as part of a JTF see Joint Publication 3.05, Doctrine For Joint Special Operations, (Draft, February 1995) Chapter III, pp. 35-43.

for conventional wars and SOF are used in essentially a force multiplier role. However, operations that fall outside the conventional arena into the category currently described by the military as operations other than war (OOTW), or low intensity conflict (LIC), typically require solutions that are inconsistent with GPF's functional specialization and culture, and more consistent with SOF's. Thus by subordinating SOF to GPF in these unconventional operations, the probability of adopting an appropriate strategic solution may be greatly reduced.

E. AN ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH TO INTEGRATION

Integration at the strategic level can be thought of essentially as the process through which a strategic solution is chosen or a campaign plan developed. The primarily hierarchical nature of military organization means that ultimately the responsibility for strategic choice rests with the commander, usually at either the regional CINC, or JTF level. The question is, what influences the choices available to the commander and the way in which he decides? Organization theory suggests that functional specialization and organizational culture provide at least partial answers to this question.

1. Organizational Culture Defined

In the field of social anthropology. There, the concept of culture is used in a very broad sense to represent the values and behavior patterns of any specific group that are passed from one generation to the next. The term *organizational culture* has been used by organization theorists and economists to refer to the basic values and behavior patterns of specific organizations. Although the term was originally used with respect to business firms, scholars such as Graham Allison, Barry Posen, and Carl Builder have extended it to government and military organizations.[14]

Within organization theory, there are several definitions of organizational culture. While theorists might argue over the minor differences found between them, for purposes of this study it is sufficient to define the term as follows:

> a set of important understandings, beliefs, and patterns of behavior, often unstated, that members of an organization share in common.[15]

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[14] See Graham Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971). See also Barry Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany Between the World Wars, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), and Carl H. Builder, The Masks of War: American Military Strategy and Analysis, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[15] This definition is adapted from those found in Mainiero and Tromley, p. 309, John P. Kotter and James L. Heskett, Corporate Culture and Performance, (New York: The Free Press, 1992), pp. 3-4, and Builder, pp. 7-10.

Organizational culture, then, can be described, as it is by Allison, as a "perceptual lens" through which members of an organization view the world. Allison also demonstrates, as do Posen and Builder, that organizational culture is a powerful tool for explaining both behavior and decision making.[16]

2. Functional Specialization Defined

Functional specialization is a very straightforward term and concept. It is, simply stated, the missions or tasks which an organization trains and prepares for.

Functional specialization, as used in this study, is closely related to the concepts of standard operating procedures (SOPs), programs, and repertoires in organization theory.[17] Organization theory defines SOPs as simple rules for accomplishing routine tasks. Programs are a collection of SOPs grouped together to accomplish a more complex task, and a repertoire is the sum total of programs available within an organization. Thus, an organization's repertoire is roughly analogous to its functional specialization; Both

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[16] See Allison, p. V and pp. 67-100. See also Posen, pp. 13-34, and Builder, pp. 31-43, 57-66, and 104-114 .

[17] See Allison, p. 83, and Posen, pp. 45-46.

represent the tasks for which the organization is trained

for and prepared to deal with.

3. Implications For Integration

How do these concepts of organizational culture and

functional specialization affect the process of integration

at the strategic level? Organization Theory suggests that

they have several effects.

a.   The Effects of Culture

Organizational culture affects integration at the

strategic level in two ways. First, it influences both the

commander's and his supporting staff's perceptions of a

problem. As mentioned before, organizational culture acts

as a perceptual lens through which members of an

organization view the world.[18] As such, it affects the way

individuals socialized within a certain culture perceive

problems. This is one of the underlying concept behind the

familiar adage, "where you stand depends on where you sit."

General Eisenhower once said:

> War is taking any problem exactly as you take a
> problem of your own life, stripping it down to its
> essentials, determining for yourself what is
> important and what you can emphasize to the
> advantage of your side; what you can emphasize
> that will be to the disadvantage of the other;
> making a plan accordingly--and then fighting just

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[18]   Allison, p. v.

as hard as you know how, never letting anything distract you from the prosecution of that conception.[19]

The problem is, however, that variations in organizational culture suggest that SOF and GPF commanders and staffs are likely to "strip down" the same problem differently.

Second, organizational culture affects commanders and staffs preferences for solutions. Once again, socialization within a culture establishes certain underlying beliefs about cause and effect relationships. Thus, individuals with one set of understandings about the causes of a particular problem are likely to prefer a different solution than those with a different set of understandings. To return to General Eisenhower's words, individuals with different organizational cultures are likely to have different ideas about what is "essential" and what can be "emphasized" to the "advantage of his own side," and "emphasized to the disadvantage of the other." Thus, SOF and GPF commanders and staffs might be expected to prefer different solutions to the same problem.

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[19] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Command in War," speech given at the National War College, 30 October 1950.

b. The Effects of Functional Specialization

Functional specialization also affects the process of integration at the strategic level. In <u>Essence of Decision</u>, Allison demonstrates that an organization's past experience and current repertoire influence the way in which it searches for solutions to new problems.[20]

In searching for solutions to new problems, organizations, and individuals within organizations, tend to search in the neighborhood of previous solutions.[21] This implies that the past experience of an organization influences the way in which it approaches problem solving. It represents essentially an "if you are not sure what to do, do what you know" mentality and search method. Thus, even if SOF and GPF perceived a problem in the same way, their solutions would likely be different and reflect each organizations past experience. Allison also demonstrates that an organization's current repertoire affects its search for solutions to new problems. As he says:

> Where situations can not be construed as standard,...the style of search and its stopping point are largely determined by existing routines.[22]

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[20] Allison, p. 84.

[21] Ibid., p. 72.

[22] Ibid., p. 84.

One might expect, then, that GPF organizations would design solutions consistent with their functional specialization and SOF organizations would do the same. Since the two have very different functional specialization's, the nature of their respective solutions should be very different as well.

4. The Nature of Military Operations

Business organizations often attempt to avoid the problem solving challenges posed by organizational culture and functional specialization by forming working groups comprised of members from different sub-organizations working together on an equal footing. For example, two department heads, from two different sub-organizations, might co-chair a working group. The group might consisting of five members of each department, tasked with solving a particular problem. This power-sharing arrangement minimizes the problems of culture and functional specialization and facilitates effective search.

The hierarchical nature of military operations and the command structure in which they are executed, however, prevent such power-sharing arrangements. Military operations require that one or the other organization be in

charge. This applies to both joint and integrated operations. Since the problems of culture and functional specialization can not be minimized the way they are in business, choosing the organization who's culture and functional specialization most closely match the nature of the problem is critical. This is widely recognized in joint operations. Operations conducted primarily on land are usually commanded by the army; those conducted primarily at sea, by the Navy, and so on. However, little consideration seems to be given to differences in culture and specialization, as they pertain to SOF and GPF, in integrated operations. This shortfall becomes especially important in unconventional warfare operations.

F. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Before laying out how this study will address the question of integration in unconventional warfare it is appropriate to say a brief word about terminology. The term "unconventional warfare" as it has been used thus far obviously encompasses a large volume of threats and missions. It is, in essence, a sort of catch-all term into which almost everything except nuclear and mid/high

intensity conflict are thrown.[23] Both DOD and scholars have recently used other terms, such as low intensity conflict and OOTW, to describe similar types of conflict, but unconventional warfare is, for reasons discussed in chapter II, a more analytically useful term and thus will be used throughout this study.

The purpose of this study, as mentioned earlier, is to examine the process of integration of GPF and SOF at the strategic level, in unconventional warfare. As mentioned above, however, unconventional warfare is a very broad area. Army and Air Force doctrine divides unconventional warfare into four broad categories; they are support for insurgency and counterinsurgency, combating terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime contingency operations. In order to limit the scope to a manageable size, this study will focus on insurgency and counterinsurgency as a representative category of unconventional warfare.   While all the services are involved in unconventional warfare, and in particular insurgency and counterinsurgency, to some extent, the primary responsibility for it falls to the army

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[23] See Richard H. Schultz, Jr., Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Uri Ra'anan, William J. Olson, Igor Lukes, ed., Guerrilla Warfare and Counterinsurgency: U.S.-Soviet Policy in the Third World, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, DC Heath and Company, 1989), pp. 16-17.

as the service responsible for land warfare. As a result, this study will further narrow its scope by focusing on army forces and doctrine.

The reasons for relying on insurgency and counterinsurgency as a representative category of unconventional warfare are several. First, more scholarly work has been done in this area than in any other.[24] Second, military doctrine with regard to insurgency and counterinsurgency is more well defined than it is for the other areas.[25] And, finally, the U.S. experience in Vietnam provides a case study of sufficient size and duration with enough participation by both SOF and GPF, to be analytically useful.

In order to accomplish the stated purpose of this study, it is first necessary to examine unconventional warfare and determine what differentiates it from conventional warfare. Chapter II, will address this task by

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[24] The literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency is well established and prolific. Some of the better works include Larry Cable, A Conflict of Myths: The Development of American counterinsurgency doctrine and the Vietnam War, (New York: New York University Press, 1986) and Unholy Grail: The US and the Wars in Vietnam 1965-8, (New York: Routledge, 1991) and work by the RAND Corporation such as Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts, (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970).

[25] Over half of Field Manual 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, (Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington, DC, December, 1990), is dedicated to insurgency and counterinsurgency. The remainder of the manual is divided between terrorism and counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and peacetime contingency operations.

reviewing both military doctrine and recent scholarly literature on the subject. Chapter II concludes by advancing the hypothesis that the characteristics of unconventional warfare are, in fact, substantially different from those of conventional warfare, and pose a significantly different problem from that posed by conventional war.

Chapter III examines GPF and SOF as organizations. It specifically considers the organizational culture and functional specialization of the two forces. Chapter III advances the hypotheses that SOF and GPF are, in fact, organizationally distinct, and that SOF are, from an organizational perspective, generally better suited to dealing with unconventional warfare as it is characterized in Chapter II.

Chapter IV uses the U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1954 through 1972 as a case study to test the hypothesis of Chapters II and III. This chapter shows a significant difference between the strategic approach taken by SOF and that taken by the conventional military. It also demonstrates that the SOF approach was often more effective than the GPF approach.

Chapter V attempts to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the conventional wisdom concerning integrated operations, as it applies to solving unconventional warfare problems, based on the analysis of the Vietnam case study. This chapter also proposes alternative command structures which might significantly improve the likelihood of designing effective solutions to unconventional warfare challenges.

II.   THINKING ABOUT UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

War is first and foremost an intellectual endeavor.

--Larry Cable[26]

A.   INTRODUCTION

A central task of this study is to examine which organization, SOF or GPF, is better suited to the task of designing solutions to unconventional warfare problems.   In order to do that, however, it is necessary first to understand the task at hand: to answer the question, what types of solutions do unconventional warfare problems require?   The purpose of this chapter, then, is to attempt to answer this question.   It does so by first discussing some of the terminology associated with unconventional warfare and defining the types of problems which fall into this category.   Next, it reviews the requirements for solving UW problems as they are outlined in both scholarly writing and military doctrine. Finally, it introduces two useful models for thinking about UW and the differences between the solutions it requires and those required by conventional war.

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[26] Larry Cable, lecture to the Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict Curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, Summer, 1995.

B. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS: A ROSE BY MANY OTHER NAMES

In the twentieth century, both the defense establishment and scholars have used a plethora of terms to describe the types of conflict with which this study is concerned. Recently, the two most popular have been low intensity conflict and operations other than war. One may wonder, therefore, with some degree of legitimacy, why this study uses the term unconventional warfare rather than one of these more recent terms. While it is not the intent to quibble over terms, there are some conceptual reasons for preferring UW to either of the aforementioned terms, or, for that matter, any of the other terms which have been used in the past. While all have generally encompassed the same types of operations, some are undoubtedly better than others and in the interest of conceptual clarity, UW is used here.

Prior to World War II, the term most often used to describe insurgency, counterinsurgency, peacekeeping, and other forms of stability operations was "small wars." The phrase was coined by the Marine Corps in the 1920s and 1930s to describe their operations in the Central American "Banana Wars." The Marines attempted to institutionalize both the term and their experience by publishing the <u>Small Wars</u>

Manual.[27]   Although this manual, last published in 1940,

remains one of the best doctrinal treatments of

unconventional warfare, both it and the use of the term

"small wars" disappeared after World War II and have not

been used since. While the Marines' understanding of the

nature of these types of conflicts as reflected in The Small

Wars Manual was excellent, the term itself has some

conceptual disadvantages.

Like the more recent term LIC, it fails to indicate a

difference in character between "small wars" and "big wars."

It implies to the observer who is unfamiliar with its

precise definition only a distinction in size. Therefore,

one is left to assume that the nature of the problem posed

by each is the same. This, however, is not the case and,

combined with the absence of the term from common use for

the past 50 years, makes "small wars" a poor choice for

describing the type of conflict with which this study is

concerned.

One of the many terms which replaced "small wars" after

World War II was unconventional warfare. At first the term

was used only very narrowly to refer to partisan or

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[27] The U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual, 1940 edition, was reprinted in 1987 as Navy and Marine
Corps Publication (NAVMC) 2890.

insurgent activities in support of U.S. operations in conventional war. Army doctrine, which was then the only service doctrine concerned with UW, defined it as subversion, escape and evasion, and guerrilla warfare. The army envisioned employing its newly formed Special Forces to conduct UW behind enemy lines in either a nuclear or conventional war with the Soviets in Europe. The idea was both to conduct directly, and train and organize partisan forces to conduct, acts of sabotage against the enemy in order to lessen his ability to conduct conventional war.[28]

Current joint doctrine defines unconventional warfare almost identically as:

> Guerrilla warfare and other low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations as well as subversion, sabotage, intelligence collection, and E&E [Escape and Evasion].[29]

It is still considered to be primarily the job of army special forces, although other SOF may assist, and consists of offensive operations in support of conventional forces or the training and support of friendly insurgents. Doctrinally, UW does not include counterinsurgency,

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[28] See Russell Weigley, History of the United States Army, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 542-543. See also Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958), and Barksdale Hamlett, "Special Forces: Training For Peace and War," *Army Information Digest,* (June, 1961), pp. 2-9.
[29] Doctrine For Joint Special Operations, Joint Publication 3.05, p. 22.

counterterrorism, peacekeeping, or any other type of stability or nation building operations.[30] These tasks or missions, however, have been associated with the term unconventional warfare outside the doctrinal arena by both politicians and academics.

In the early 1960s, the Kennedy administration began to use the term in a broader sense. Unconventional warfare became closely associated with the administrations efforts to counter the communist's "wars of national liberation." Although army doctrine continued to refer to unconventional warfare narrowly as offensive partisan or insurgent guerrilla operations, the popular conception of unconventional warfare came to include counterinsurgency.[31] Similarly, professional and scholarly journals began to refer to counterinsurgency as unconventional warfare. In fact, during the Vietnam war both insurgency and counterinsurgency became almost synonymous with unconventional warfare. UW is conceptually useful because it emphasizes the difference between these types problems

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[30] Counterinsurgency is addressed in <u>Doctrine For Joint Special Operations</u>, Joint Publication 3.05, pp. 28-32. It is also addressed, along with counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and other forms of stability and nation building operations in Field Manual 100-5 <u>Operations</u>, (Department of the Army, June, 1993), Chapter 13 and Field Manual 100-20/Air Force Pam 3-2, <u>Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict</u>, (Headquarters, Department of the Army and the Air Force, 1990),
[31] See Weigley, <u>History of the United States Army</u>, pp. 542-546. See also Krepinevich, pp. 27-46.

and more conventional problems. It suggests that what conventional war is, unconventional war is not.

After Vietnam, however, the term low intensity conflict gradually began to replace unconventional warfare. This shift to the term LIC for describing insurgency and counterinsurgency as well as the emerging missions of counterterrorism and peacekeeping was largely precipitated by the development of the notion of a "spectrum" of conflict. The "spectrum," which first appeared in the 1970s, divided warfare into high, mid, and low intensity conflicts. Nuclear war or conventional war with the Soviets constituted high intensity conflict; conventional, inter-state, war, with any middle power outside of Europe, mid-intensity conflict; and virtually everything else low intensity conflict.[32]

Joint doctrine defines LIC as:

> Political-military confrontation between states or *groups* below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves *protracted* struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. *It is waged by a combination of means employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments.* Low intensity conflicts are often localized, generally

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[32] These characterizations of high, mid, and low intensity, conflict are the author's own and are not described this way in official doctrine.

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in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications."[33] (emphasis added)

Substantively, this definition is as good as any other that can be conjured up for describing the type of conflict with which this study is concerned, the use of the term low intensity conflict, however, creates some analytical misperceptions similar to those associated with "small wars." It encourages the notion that conflicts at one end are simply "more intense" than conflicts at the other, not necessarily different. And, as will be demonstrated in the next section, this is not the case.

In the 1990s, the term "operations other than war" began to be used as a synonym for LIC. This term, however, is, at least conceptually, the least valuable so far. By referring to such things as insurgency and counter insurgency as something "other than war," is worse, by far, than describing it as a "small war," or "low intensity conflict." It implies that these problems are somehow not as serious as the problem of conventional war, and, in reality, nothing could be further from the truth. The insurgency in Vietnam proved very difficult to solve. So difficult, in fact, that it never was successfully solved.

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[33] FM 100-20, p. 1-1.

Similarly, the recent problem in Somalia posed very difficult challenges and it is questionable weather or not that problem was satisfactorily solved.

Unconventional warfare, then, is, by process of elimination, the logical choice. Unlike LIC or "small war", it implies that there is a characteristic difference between itself and conventional warfare. Similarly, unlike OOTW, the use of the word warfare acknowledges that these types of conflict are, in fact, a process of strategic interaction between adversaries and that there must be a winner and a loser.

For purposes of this study, then, unconventional warfare is defined as follows:

> Political-military confrontation between states or groups (frequently one of each) below conventional war. It frequently involves protracted struggles including, but not limited to, the use of terrorism and guerrilla tactics. Unconventional warfare ranges from subversion to the use of organized violence and armed force. It is waged by a combination of means employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments.

This is obviously adapted from the definition of LIC found in FM 100-20, <u>Military Operations Other Than War</u>. The operational categories of insurgency and counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime

contingency operations found in FM 100-20 are also useful and will be applied to UW in this study as well. This is not to say, however, that all peacekeeping and peacetime contingencies are UW. Some may resemble conventional conflict much more closely. It is also worth repeating that UW, as defined and used in this study, is not the same way UW is defined and used in joint doctrine. The doctrinal definition is much narrower.

C.   SOLVING A UW CHALLENGE

The idea that the challenge posed by UW is somehow different in character from that posed by conventional warfare and that UW requires a different sort of solution is certainly nothing new to Americans. As noted earlier, President Kennedy believed in 1962 that combating communist "wars of national liberation" required "a whole new kind of strategy" as well as "a wholly different kind of force."[34] Even before the threat of communist expansion through the use of UW existed, the marine corps recognized there was a difference between conventional, "big wars," and what it had been doing in Latin America. The 1940 version of the Small Wars Manual states:

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[34] Weigley, The American Way of War, p. 456, see also Krepinevich, p. 27-33.

Since the [First] World War there has been a flood of literature dealing with the old principles illustrated and the new techniques developed in that war; but there always have been and ever will be other wars of an altogether different kind, undertaken in very different theaters of operations and requiring entirely different methods from those of the World War.[35]

Even today, with regard to the role of U.S. forces in Bosnia, there are constant references to a "different" role for the military as the following excerpt from a recent newspaper article points out:

With 20,000 Americans flowing into Bosnia-Herzegovina, officers such as [Army captain Mike] Kasales, often the first U.S. soldiers into an area, have quickly become mini-ambassadors, quick-study diplomats who are playing a key role in determining the success of the peacekeeping effort. This, the experts say, is not a generals war...Its like a cavalry mission from the 1800s and they are taming the Wild, Wild West.[36]

Thus, the "gut feeling" is that UW requires a different solution than conventional war. This "feeling" is, in fact, borne out by the evidence.

Since the end of World War II, a prolific literature in the field of UW has developed. Inspired largely by the conflicts associated with the breakdown of Europe's overseas empires and the U.S. failure in Vietnam, this literature

[35] Small Wars Manual, p. 8

[36] Nora Zamichow, "Captains Courageous Enough Not to Fight," *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1996, p. 1

highlights the fact that UW requires substantially different solutions from conventional war.[37] Robert Asprey, for example, in <u>War in the Shadows</u>, asserts that the historical record of UW and guerrilla tactics clearly demonstrates those who have attempted to apply conventional solutions to UW problems have consistently failed.[38]

Current doctrine, likewise, confirms the "feeling" that UW requires a different type of solution. The army's FM 100-5 <u>Operations</u>, for example, lists the principles of conventional war as: objective; offensive; mass; economy of force; maneuver; unity of command; security; surprise; and simplicity. In the manual's discussion of OOTW, it retains objective and security, modifies unity of command to read unity of effort, and adds legitimacy, perseverance, and restraint.[39] This difference in principles between conventional and unconventional war would seem to suggest a difference in solutions.

What, then, are the differences between the solutions required for UW and those required for conventional war?

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[37] Some of the scholarly works which support the notion that UW requires different solutions than conventional war are: Krepinevich; Cable; and Robert A. Asprey, <u>War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History,</u> (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1975). The best doctrinal manual for highlighting the differences is FM 100-20.

[38] Asprey, p. xii.

[39] FM 100-5, pp. 2-4 to 2-6 and 13-3 to 13-4.

While the literature and doctrine cover a wide range of operations and activities, from insurgency and counterinsurgency to peacekeeping, and while each category and each operation is somewhat unique, a basic trend in solutions does emerge. That trend is that in conventional war, victory depends on defeating the enemy's armed forces in battle while in UW, it tends to depend less on victory on the battlefield, and more on disabling the enemy's operational system and depriving him of popular support. This is perhaps most clearly and poignantly illustrated in the now famous conversation between Harry Summers and a North Vietnamese counterpart:

> "You know you never defeated us on the battlefield," said the American colonel.
>
> The North Vietnamese colonel pondered this remark a moment. "That may be so," he replied "but it is also irrelevant."[40]

This UW requires a more indirect solution than conventional conflicts is almost universally reflected in the literature. Larry Cable, for example, with respect to insurgency, has stated:

> While all warfare is political, insurgency is purely a contest of political will. Military operations are relevant only in so far as they

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[40] Harry G. Summers Jr., <u>On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War,</u> (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 1.

have a direct, substantial, and measurable effect upon the political will of the contestants and upon the uncommitted majority of the population. Thus while the cliché "firepower kills" is true, it is impossible to kill one's way to victory in an insurgent environment.[41]

Similarly, Andrew Krepinevich, in discussing guerrilla warfare as it pertains to insurgency states:

In conventional wars, strategy prescribes the conquest of the enemy's territory, yet this seldom occurs prior to the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle. These rules do not apply, however, against an enemy who refuses to fight for territory. In an insurgency, the way to destroy the insurgent is to attack him at the source of his strength: the population.[42]

The indirect trend in UW solutions, in addition to being prevalent in the literature is also prevalent in current doctrine for UW. FM 100-20 <u>Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict</u>, for example, lists the "Low Intensity Conflict Imperatives" as: political dominance; unity of effort; adaptability; legitimacy; and perseverance.[43] Conspicuously absent are some of the principles of conventional war such as offensive, mass, and maneuver. The manual also points out that military operations must often be restrained and that commanders must

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[41] Larry Cable, "Straddling the Cultural Gaps: Special Forces in the Indirect Action Environment," in *Special Warfare*, January, 1996, p. 12.

[42] Krepinevich, p. 10.

[43] FM 100-20, p. 1-5.

consider the psychological effects on the population as well as the tactical effects on the opponent. It also points out that the former must take priority over the latter.[44]

While it is possible to go on quoting from the literature and doctrine at length, it may be more useful to discuss some of the dynamics of UW which make an indirect solution more appropriate and necessary.

First, the choice of a UW strategy often results from a position of weakness. It is generally a tool of the weak against the strong. This may not be categorically true, but it is true in most cases, especially insurgency and terrorism. This fact implies the weaker contestant must avoid direct military confrontation in order to survive. He seeks to win not by overpowering the stronger opponent, but by eroding his will to fight or his ability to exercise control. To do this, he uses clandestine, underground organizations, irregular forces, and guerrilla and terror tactics.[45]

In order to avoid destruction by the stronger opponent, these organizations and forces must either hide physically,

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[44] Ibid., pp. 1-9 to 1-11.

[45] Clandestine organizations and irregular forces can be either non-state organizations and guerrilla, terrorist, or partisan forces or regular military organizations and forces operating in an irregular manner.

or remain anonymous within the larger population. Of these two choices, however, only remaining anonymous within the population allows him to be effective. As Malaya and the Philippines have demonstrated, if irregular forces and organizations can be isolated from the population they can easily be defeated or rendered irrelevant.[46] Thus achieving anonymity is vital to the success of the weaker belligerent.

Hiding behind a "veil of anonymity"[47] allows the weaker belligerent not only to survive, but maintain the initiative as well. By remaining anonymous, he is able to fight only when he chooses and only if he can afford to lose. This, in turn, has significant implications for the strategy of the stronger belligerent.

The stronger belligerent faces somewhat of a dilemma when it comes to employing his military force. He could easily destroy the opponent if he could effectively target him. The problem is, he cannot. This leaves him with essentially two options, he can wait for the opponent to come to him or he can attempt to "pierce the veil."

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[46] For a detailed account of the Malayan case, see Asprey, Vol. II, pp. 858-873. For the Philippines, see Asprey, pp. 818-832. See also Benedict J. Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion: A study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1977).

[47] The term "veil of anonymity" is taken from lectures presented by Gordon McCormick at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, Summer, 1995.

The first option is likely to result in two problems. First, waiting for the opponent to come to him means he will never be able to inflict losses on the opponent which are larger than the opponent is willing to bear.[48] Second, since he cannot effectively identify the opponent the use of force is likely to be indiscriminate. This is counterproductive. In the process of killing ten guerrillas he may create forty more thus exacerbating his problem.

The stronger belligerent must therefore attempt to "pierce the veil." This is obviously the more effective method, the question is how is that done?

It is essentially a question of intelligence; intelligence obtained not through imagery, sensors, and other high tech devices, but from human sources. After all, the problem is not finding the opponent physically, it's separating him from the population at large. The required intelligence can be obtained in essentially two ways, both of which involve the general population. First, it can be obtained by increasing the popular perceived legitimacy of the stronger belligerent.[49] This is essentially convincing

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[48] For a more complete discussion of the problems of anonymity and a strategy of attrition in guerrilla conflict see W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzle, The Lessons of Vietnam, (New York: Crane Russak & Co., 1977), Chapter V.

[49] The term "popular perceived legitimacy" is take Larry Cable, "Straddling the Cultural Gaps," p. 11.

the population that they should support you, the stronger belligerent, who already has *de facto* control, rather than the opponent, the guerrillas or irregulars who operate in their midst. Increasing perceived legitimacy will effectively increase the likelihood that the population will "turn-in" the guerrillas and separate them from their base of support. Increasing perceived legitimacy requires the employment of effective psychological operations (psyops), civic action programs designed to alleviate any real or perceived grievances, and an ability to protect the population from reprisals by the opponent. These, in turn, require effective political leadership, a detailed historical and cultural understanding of the society, and an effective presence within the population linked to an ability to respond rapidly with force.

The second way of obtaining the intelligence required to "pierce the veil" is by controlling the population. This may require "emergence measures" such as restricting movement, curfews, and even relocation. The goal of such measures is to deprive the guerrilla or irregular the ability to move freely in and out of the population. This method is again demonstrated in examples provided by Malaya,

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the Philippines, and, more recently, by the methods of the 3rd Special Forces Group in Haiti. This method requires, once again, an effective presence and an understanding of history, culture, and society.

The methods described above for identifying the opponent are also effective for separating him from his logistics base, to the extent he is supported internally. Irregular forces, just like regular forces, must eat and obtain other supply requirements. Their clandestine nature, however, prevents them from establishing an overt logistics system. They therefore must rely either on a covet, external system, or an internal system of supply through the population. Increasing perceived legitimacy, as discussed above, will make the population less willing to support the irregulars. Similarly, controlling the population will make supporting them more difficult.

To the extent that it is necessary for the stronger belligerent to separate the weaker from the population in order to succeed, the weaker must likewise remain connected. In this sense, he must try to do the same tasks, only in

reverse.   That is he must increase his perceived legitimacy

and increase his control over the population.[50]

D. TWO MODELS FOR THINKING ABOUT UW

The dynamics of UW are, to say the least, complex.   The

above discussion highlights some of those dynamics and

explains somewhat the nature of the solutions required for

UW problems, but is by no means comprehensive.   Indeed, it

attempts to relay in a few pages the most important parts of

an entire literature.   It is useful, therefore to provide

the following two models for thinking about UW.   Although

both were designed specifically for insurgency, they are, to

a large degree, generalizable to UW as a whole.

The first is a rather simple, but extremely useful

model for thinking about the dynamics of UW.   Developed by

Dr. Gordon McCormick, it is lightly referred to as the

"mystic triangle," or triangulus mysticus (see Figure 1).[51]

The model highlights the fact that UW is largely a

competition for control of the population (labeled Society

in the diagram) and that military efforts alone are

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[50]   The concepts in this discussion of UW dynamics are derived from a class on revolutionary warfare
taught by Gordon McCormick at the Naval Postgraduate School in the summer of 1995. Special thanks to
Dr. McCormick for explaining his ideas in detail and helping with the formulation of this section.
[51]   The Mystic Triangle was developed by Dr. Gordon McCormick and presented in a class on low
intensity conflict at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, in the summer of 1995. Both the
Triangle and the description of its dynamics are taken from this class.

ineffective. It allows one to visualize the essential components of strategy for both belligerents (Because the model was designed for insurgency, belligerents are labeled state and counter-state in the diagram, they could, however, represent any two belligerents in a UW environment). Each arrow in the diagram represents a necessary component of an effective strategy. The arrow along the base of the triangle represents the military and paramilitary activities of each side. It should again be emphasized that discriminate and measured application of force is important for both sides. The arrows along the sides of the triangle represent the importance of population control. Again, the tools for affecting these legs are presence, civic action, and psyops. Finally, the arrows across the middle represent efforts to break the oppositions ties to the society. The tools for accomplishing this task are, once again, presence and psyops.
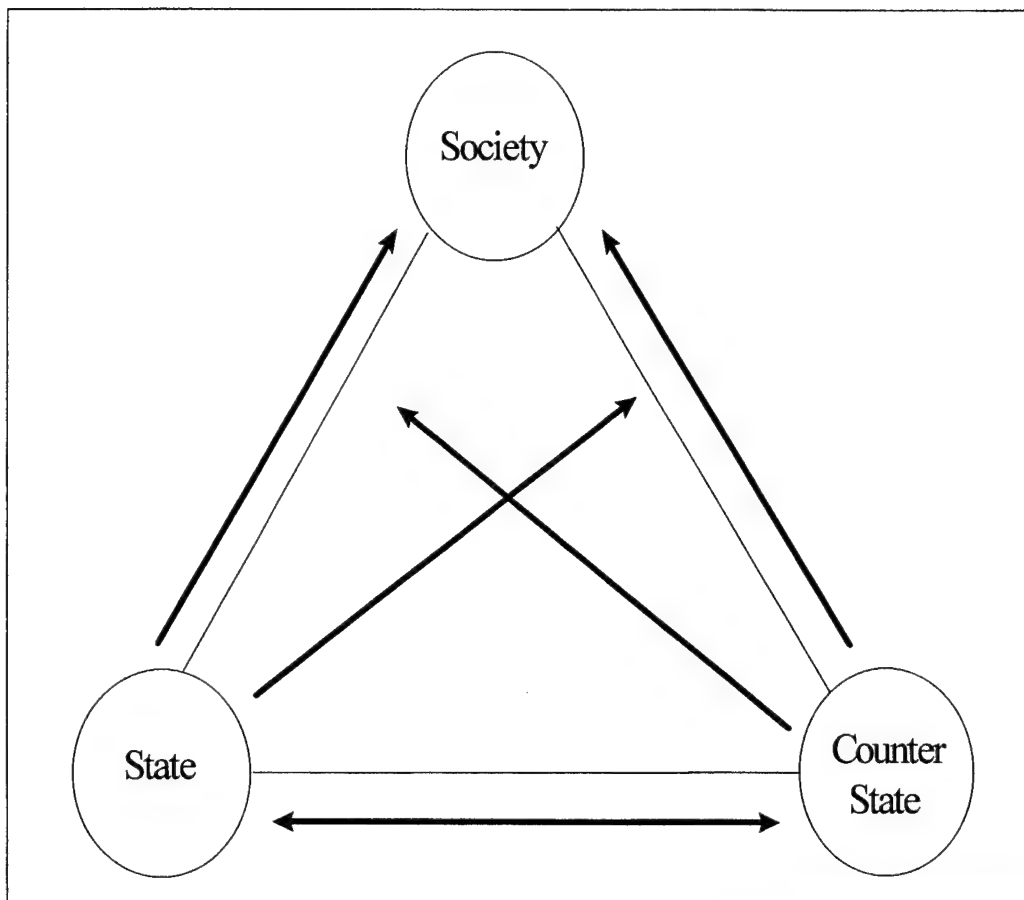
Figure 1. Mystic Triangle Model

As stated, this model is simple, but it provides a handy tool for thinking about the dynamics of UW. It is simple enough to be remembered easily and applied cognitively as one examines case studies. For this reason, it is offered here.

The second model, taken from the work of Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, is slightly more complex.[52] This model,

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[52] This model and the description of its dynamics and implications for strategy are taken directly from Leites and Wolf, pp. 32-37.

like the mystic triangle, is extremely useful for thinking about the components of UW strategy and the strategic alternatives available to counter a UW threat.

The Leites and Wolf model views insurgency as a system (see Figure 2). The model begins by recognizing that an insurgent organization, or, indeed, the weaker belligerent, requires certain inputs. These inputs, recruits, food, shelter, money, and material, for example, must be obtained from either internal or external sources. The mix between external and internal inputs is variable and unique in each case. These inputs are, in turn, used by the organization to generate certain outputs or activities. Outputs and activities include acts of sabotage, violence against individuals, and small scale attacks against the state as well as the exercise of administrative control over the population. The objective of the insurgents outputs is to undermine the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of the state.

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│         │          │      INPUTS         │                          │
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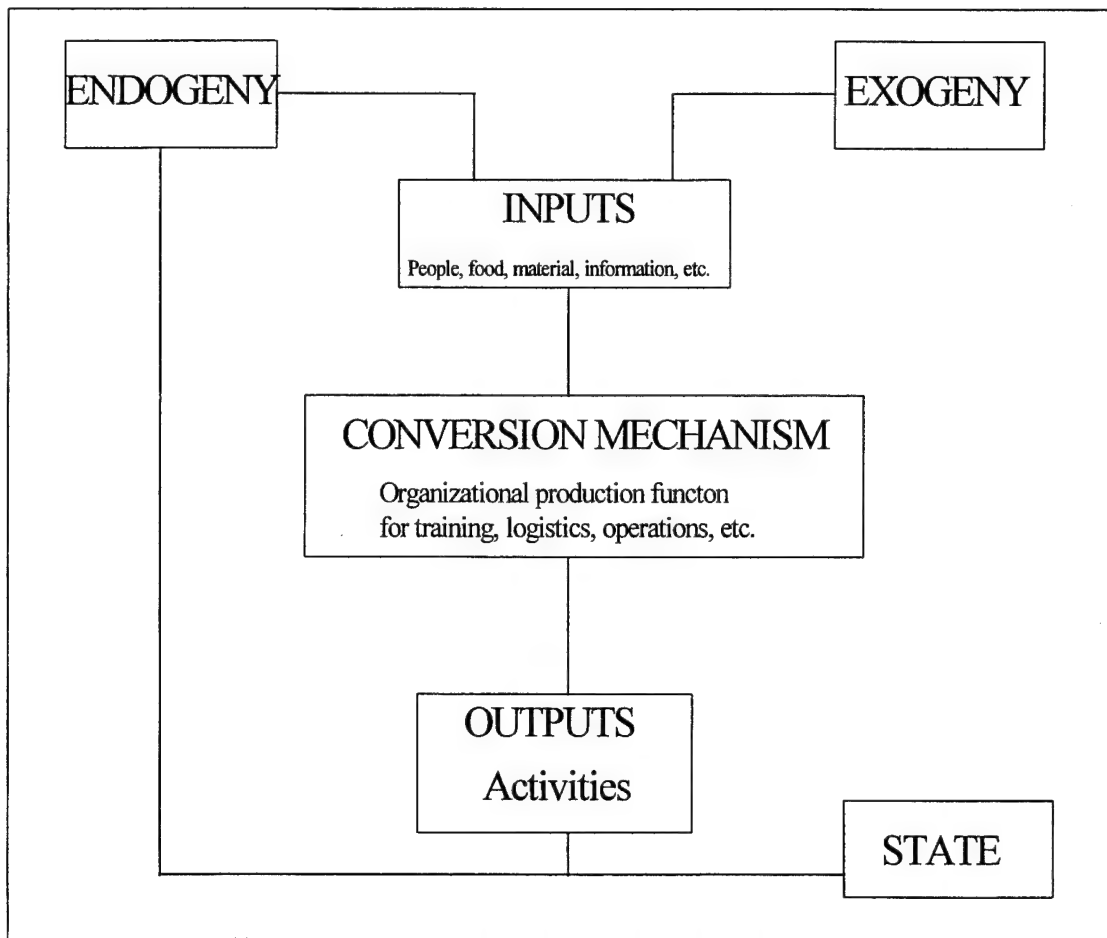
Figure 2. Leites/Wolf System Model[53]

Viewing insurgency or UW as a system allows one to identify four distinct counter strategies. The first is to raise the weaker belligerent's cost for obtaining inputs. The aim of this strategy is essentially to deny the organization the inputs it needs to produce outputs. Examples of this strategy include interdiction of supplies with direct military force or attempts to build barriers

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[53] This diagram of Leites' and Wolf's model is modified slightly from the original.

that impede the movement of people and supplies from the source to the destination.

The second strategy is to impede the process by which the weaker belligerent converts inputs to outputs or, in other words, reduce the efficiency of his organizational production process. This strategy essentially targets the organizational infrastructure. Examples of such a strategy include creating distrust and friction within the organization by planting rumors; attracting defectors or turning high level operatives; and conducting an effective psyops campaign by disseminating credible misinformation about the organization's motives and behavior.

The third strategy is to destroy the weaker belligerent's outputs. This is the more traditional counter-force strategy. It is important to remember, however, that an effective counter force strategy requires the discriminate application of force. This, in turn, requires detailed intelligence and a restrictive use of firepower.

The fourth strategy is to reduce the effects of the weaker belligerent's outputs or activities on both the stronger belligerent and the population. This essentially

entails increasing both the stronger belligerent's and the population's ability to absorb punishment. This strategy has two components. The first involves such measures as hardening villages, increasing the strength and effectiveness of police and other paramilitary forces and relocating the population so that it is less accessible to the weaker belligerent. The second component involves effective completion of civic programs designed to increase the stronger belligerent's legitimacy and weaken grievances the weaker belligerent may be using to undermine the stronger and increase its own strength.

Taken together, the mystic triangle model and the Leites/Wolf model provide a more comprehensive way of looking at the differences between UW and conventional war and the nature of effective solutions for each. They are therefore offered here as useful tools that can be used to help analyze the process of integration at the strategic level.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to cover a considerable amount of ground. It has attempted to convey concepts and dynamics which are, as mentioned previously, the subject of

a rather exhaustive literature. It is useful, therefore, to briefly review some of the main points.

First, UW, as defined in this study, is:

> Political-military confrontation between states or groups below the level of conventional war.

As such, the nature of the effective solutions for UW is significantly different from the nature of the solutions for conventional conflict.

Second, the fundamental difference between the solutions for UW and conventional war is that victory in UW depends less on destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle and more on destroying his operating system by "piercing the veil" and separating him from his base of support.

Finally, effectively solutions which accomplish the task of destroying the enemy's operating system and separating him from his base of support require several things; Chief among them are intelligence, a detailed understanding of the history, culture and society in which the conflict occurs, and a highly discriminate use of force. Solutions to UW are essentially intelligence rich, and force poor.

III.   CHARACTERIZING THE ORGANIZATIONS

War is taking any problem exactly as you take a problem of your own life, stripping it down to its essentials, determining for yourself what is important and what you can emphasize to the advantage of your side; what you can emphasize to the disadvantage of the other; making a plan accordingly--and then fighting just as hard as you know how, never letting anything distract you from the prosecution of that conception.

Dwight D. Eisenhower[54]

A. INTRODUCTION

Chapter II has reviewed the kinds of solutions required for UW, the next step is to review the tools available for crafting those solutions.

In Chapter I, the role of organizational culture and functional specialization in integrated operations was spelled out. As discussed there, the perceptions, beliefs, and past experience of an organization can affect the way it views and thinks about problems. This, in turn, can affect its approach to solving problems.   Understanding an organization's culture and specialization can help both to explain and predict behavior. The question, then, is what are the organizational cultures and functional specialization of SOF and GPF? What "lens" does each look

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[54] Eisenhower speech.

through when it "strips down" a problem and what capabilities does it believe it can "emphasize" to solve it?

This chapter explores these questions by first examining the organizational culture and functional specialization of each organization, and then examining how these cultures and specialties might effect the formulation of campaign plans and strategy in integrated operations.

B. GPF AS AN ORGANIZATION

As an organization, GPF displays both a distinct culture and specialization. Although both have changed slightly over the course of American military history, the current culture and specialization of GPF have remained constant through most of the twentieth century and have, for the most part, been reinforced by their experience over the past 50 years.

1. Organizational Culture

The organizational culture of GPF has, at its roots, the principles of total victory and destruction of the enemy's armed forces through the use of overwhelming firepower.[55] This culture has grown out of GPF's experience

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[55] Weigley, although he does not refer specifically to organizational culture, chronicles well the GPF belief in overwhelming force through the use of firepower, mass, and mobility in The American Way of War.

fighting the nation's wars, and is clearly reflected in current doctrine.

The origins of GPF culture can be traced all the way back to the Civil War. That war was America's first total war, and the strategy of annihilation employed by Ulysses S. Grant in his relentless pursuit of the Southern army, its first taste of overwhelming force.[56]

The translation of Clausewitz into English in 1873 and his subsequent popularity among American military officers also helped to develop the culture of GPF. For Clausewitz, the center of gravity in war was unquestionably the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. In On War, he states:

> The destruction of the enemy's armed forces, amongst all the objects which can be pursued in war, appears always as the one which overrules all others. The destruction of the enemy's military force, is the leading principle of war, and for the whole chapter of positive action the direct way to the object.[57]

Clausewitz also supports the notion that if force is used, it should be used in an overwhelming manner.

> Now philanthropists may easily imagine there is a skillful method of disarming and overcoming an enemy without causing great bloodshed, and that

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[56] Weigley, The American Way of War, p. xx.
[57] Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. By Sir Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. I, 44-45.

this is the proper tendency of the Art of War. However plausible this may appear, still it is an error which must be extirpated;...To introduce into the philosophy of war itself a principle of moderation would be an absurdity.[58]

Thus the popularity of Clausewitzian theory tended to reinforce the culture which had begun to develop out of the Civil war, especially the principle of destruction of the enemy's armed forces through the application of overwhelming force. GPF's experience in the first half of the twentieth century would do even more to reinforce the emerging culture.

World Wars I and II were, like the Civil War, total wars. The objective, was, in Clausewitzian terms, the complete overthrow of the enemy, and destruction of his armed forces, through the use of overwhelming force, was the avenue through which this goal was pursued. Thus by 1945, the GPF culture, based on the aforementioned principles, was well established.

Since 1945 this overwhelming force culture has persisted basically unchanged. This is evidenced by events in Korea, the development of what Gordon Craig and Alexander George have called the *Never-Again School,* the publication

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[58] Ibid., pp. I, 2-3.

of <u>On Strategy</u> by Harry Summers in 1981, the development of the Weinberger Doctrine in 1984, and the emergence of the "Powell Doctrine" following the Persian Gulf War.[59]

In many ways Korea clearly demonstrates GPF culture. General MacArthur's famous statement "There is no substitute for victory...War's very objective is victory" demonstrates his belief, in particular, and GPF's belief in general that if America were going to engage in war, then it should engage in nothing short of total war.[60] Furthermore, his belief that massive air power and nuclear weapons should be used against China clearly demonstrate the overwhelming force concept.[61] The cultural preference for total war and the expectation of total victory is also demonstrated by comments made by General Mark Clark. In July 1953, shortly after the signing of the armistice, he told reporters at a news conference "I cannot find it in me to exult in this hour."[62]

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[59] The *Never-Again School* is a phrase coined by Gordon Craig and Alexander George in <u>Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time</u>, Third Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) Chapter 19, *The Role of Force in Diplomacy, A Continuing Dilemma for U.S. Foreign Policy.* Harry Summers, <u>On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War</u>, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1981), and Casper Weinberger's speech to the National Press Club in Washington DC on November 28, 1984 as cited in *Defense,* January, 1985 pp. 2-8, also provide evidence of the overwhelming force culture of GPF.
[60] Weigley, <u>The American Way of War</u>, p. 391.
[61] Ibid., p. 390.
[62] Cited in Krepinevich, p. 16.

The frustration felt by General Clark and other top ranking military officers, as well as the American people, lead to the development of the *Never-Again School*.[63] This School essentially stipulated that America should not limit its use of force in war. It should only become involved if it was willing to use any means necessary, including nuclear weapons, to win decisively. This school of thought is partially responsible for the doctrine of Massive Retaliation developed by the Eisenhower administration. The *Never-Again School* both provides evidence of the total war/overwhelming force culture of GPF as it existed in the 1950s, and served to strengthen that culture even more.

More recent evidence of the overwhelming force culture can be found in Harry Summers' <u>On Strategy</u>, and the Weinberger Doctrine, both of which are, to a certain degree, an extension of the *Never-Again School* to the post-Vietnam era. Summers, who's book is used as text at the Army Command and General Staff College, the Army, Air, and Naval War Colleges, and the National Defense University, hypothesizes that the U.S. lost in Vietnam in part because

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[63] Craig and George, Chapter 19. See also Weigley, <u>The American Way of War</u>, p. 451, and Krepinevich, p. 16-17.

it failed to take into account the lessons of Korea.[64]   He

argues that because the U.S. failed because it did not fight

a total war against North Vietnam.   Political restraints, he

argues, prevented the effective application of overwhelming

force, and thus contributed to the U.S. failure.[65]   Whether

or not one agrees with Summers, the analysis, and the

popularity with which it is received among GPF, point to the

continued dominance of the overwhelming force culture.

Similarly, the Weinberger doctrine indicates the

continued dominance of the total war/overwhelming force

mentality.   On November 28, 1984, Weinberger, then Secretary

of Defense in the Reagan Administration, elaborated six

"tests" which should be considered before the U.S. commits

military forces in support of foreign policy.   They are:

> 1. The United States should not commit forces to
> combat overseas unless the particular engagement
> or occasion is deemed vital to our national
> interest or that of our allies.
> 2.   If we decide it is necessary to put combat
> troops into a given situation, we should do so
> wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of
> winning.   If we are unwilling to commit the forces
> or resources necessary to achieve our objectives,
> we should not commit them at all.
> 3.   If we do decide to commit forces to combat
> overseas, we should have clearly defined political
> and military objectives.   And we should know
> precisely how our forces can accomplish those

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[64] Summers, pp. 13-17.
[65] Ibid., pp. 170-173.

clearly defined objectives. And we should have, and send, the forces needed to do just that.

4.   The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed--their size, composition, and disposition--must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.

5.   Before the United States commits combat forces abroad there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress.   This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation.

6.   The commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.[66]

Several of Weinberger's tests, especially 2, 3, and 4, closely resemble Summers' lessons from On Strategy and reflect the overwhelming force principle.   Michael Handel has asserted that Summers' work, in fact, had an impact on Weinberger's formulation of these tests.[67]   Once again, as in the case of On Strategy, the Weinberger Doctrine is not only a manifestation of GPF culture, it also reinforces that culture by adding the prestige and weight of the Secretary of Defense.

Finally, the most recent evidence that the total war/overwhelming force culture of GPF is alive and well is the development of what has come to be known as the Powell

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[66]   Weinberger in *Defense*, pp. 2-8.

[67]   Michael Handel, Masters of War: Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Jomini, (Portland Oregon: Frank Cass , 1992), p.160.

doctrine in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. Powell, who

spent his career as a GPF officer, and, incidentally, was

Weinberger's military assistant in 1984, established four

criteria for the use of military force which appeared in an

article by Edwin J. Arnold Jr., in the Spring, 1994 issue of

Parameters. They are:

> 1. Force should only be used as a last resort.
> 2. Military force should be used only when there
> is a clear cut military objective.
> 3. Military force should be used only when we can
> measure that the military objective has been
> achieved.
> 4.   Military force should be used only in an
> *overwhelming* fashion.[68] (Emphasis added)

History and the writing of generals and politicians are

not the only evidence that GPF culture is dominated by the

total war/overwhelming force principles. Military doctrine

also reflects this fact. Joint Pub 1, for example, in

referring to the object of joint campaigns, states "The

objective is the employment of overwhelming military

force"[69] A second example can be found in the Army's FM

100-5. The manual states:

> The American people expect decisive victory and
> abhor unnecessary casualties. They prefer quick
> resolution of conflicts and reserve the right to

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[68] Edwin J. Arnold Jr., "The Use of Military Power in Pursuit of the National Interest," *Parameters*, Spring 1994, p. 7.
[69] Joint Pub 1, p. 47.

reconsider their support should any of these conditions not be met.[70]
The manual also states:

> The ultimate military purpose of war is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces and will to fight.[71]

Thus, it is clear that GPF culture centers around the principles of total victory and destruction of the enemy's armed forces through the application of overwhelming force. This culture developed primarily through the wartime experience of GPF, especially during World Wars I and II. As Weigley points out:

> In the history of American strategy, the direction taken by the American conception of war made most American strategists, through most of the time span of American history, strategists of annihilation...until the strategy of annihilation became the American way of war.[72]

Although Korea and Vietnam provided experience which ran counter to the culture, GPF culture did not change, rather those events were rationalized in terms of the culture. As Larry Cable has pointed out, the organizational culture of GPF, even after the experience of Vietnam, can be characterized by two popular axioms repeated throughout the ranks with zeal; they are "shoot move and communicate," and

[70] FM 100-5, p. 1-3.
[71] Ibid., p. 2-4.
[72] Weigley, The American Way of War, p. xxii.

"find, fix, and destroy."[73]   The Persian Gulf war has

largely reaffirmed the belief in these axioms and the total

war/overwhelming force principles, making any future change

in culture unlikely, at least for the immediate future.

2. Functional Specialization

The functional specialization of GPF, like their

culture, is distinct.   Although the mission of GPF is, in

the broadest sense, to fight and win the nations wars, for

nearly 50 years, GPF have specialized in fighting a war in

Europe against an overwhelmingly conventional Soviet threat.

Indeed, this specialization in conventional European war

goes back further than 50 years, it can be traced all the

way back to World War I.   Since that time, the primary

contingency for GPF has been to defeat one or another of the

European powers on a European battlefield.   This

specialization is evidenced by historical example, recent

scholarly research, and, most powerfully, the type of

training conducted by GPF.

That GPF had grown accustomed to war in Europe is

evident in their experience in Korea.   Both the Chinese and,

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[73]   These expressions are widely known and regarded as tactical axioms within the U.S. Army's
conventional forces. This particular reference is taken from a lecture delivered to the Special
Operations/Low Intensity Conflict curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA., in the
summer of 1995.

by extension, the North Koreans placed great emphasis on infiltration and encirclement. American forces, accustomed to the relatively linear battlefield of Europe, experienced great difficulty adjusting to these tactics. They were unaccustomed to dealing with an enemy that suddenly appeared in rear areas and attacked from several directions at once, frequently at night. Additionally, American forces had become dependent on roads, high tech radio communications, and artillery and other forms of fire support, none of which were always available or effective in the Korean terrain.[74] As Weigley points out:

> By 1950...the Army had become so adjusted to European war that it had to struggle to cope with Korean and Chinese methods...Its habituation to European war sometimes put the American Army in Korea approximately in the condition of Braddock's Regulars on the Monongahela.[75]

The GPF specialization in European war is also evident in a recent RAND corporation study.[76]

it clearly demonstrates that the Army's GPF has focused on a war in Europe. It notes, for example, despite the Army's assertion that its goal is to be prepared for any world-wide

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[74] These points are summarized from Weigley's discussion of U.S. problems in Korea in The History of the United States Army, pp. 518-519.

[75] Ibid., p. 519.

[76] John K. Secater, Carl H. Builder, M. D. Baccus, Wayne Madwell, The Army in a Changing World: The Role of Organizational Vision, RAND Corporation Study, R-3882-A, June 1990.

contingency, its "Focus on high intensity, conflict in central Europe is incontestable."[77] It points out that in 1990, nearly one-quarter of the Army's GPF were forward deployed to Europe, nearly another quarter had equipment pre-positioned there, and a third quarter's only existing contingency plans called for deployment to Europe. The study quite correctly states:

> We believe that the Army's thoughts and actions reflect a single, dominant, widely shared sense of identity and purpose: *the instantly ready armored defender of central Europe.*[78] (emphasis original)

Finally, the GPF functional specialization for a high intensity, European, war is evidenced by their training and doctrine. The scenarios employed at the Army's combat training centers, for example focus on employing Air land Battle Doctrine to defeat a Soviet style force. Scenarios used at the National Training Center, (NTC) Ft Irwin, California, The Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) in Germany, and the Joint Readiness Training Center, (JRTC) Ft Polk, Louisiana, all focus on combating an opposing force modeled on the Soviets and employing Soviet style tactics. Even in the wake of the drastically reduced soviet threat,

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[77] Ibid., p. 23.
[78] Ibid., p. 23.

the scenarios have changed little. At NTC and CMTC, the scenarios focus almost exclusively on mid to high intensity conflict using conventional, soviet style, forces. Typically, a brigade task force conducts both force-on-force and live-fire training in large scale, armored battles. Even at JRTC, which is designed to provide GPF's light forces, the forces most likely to be deployed to UW contingencies, a realistic training environment, the scenarios typically involve only two or three days of UW training followed by a conventional, mid intensity phase. Furthermore, the UW training continues to focus solely on the destruction of enemy irregular forces in the field. Typically, rotations at JRTC involve a two to three day UW phase in which GPF forces attempt to combat irregular guerrilla forces in an insurgency or other UW environment. Although GPF forces typically perform poorly in this environment, the opposing force always escalates to mid intensity, conventional, Soviet style tactics, which the GPF are better prepared to handle.[79] These scenarios and their focus on Soviet style opposition clearly reflect GPF's specialization in conventional, European war.

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[79] The discussion of training center rotations is derived from the scenarios for NTC rotations 92-4, 92-5, and 92-6, and JRTC rotations 88-1, 92-11, 93-11.

C. SOF AS AN ORGANIZATION

SOF became a permanent part of the force structure in the early 1950s. Since that time, they have developed along distinct organizational lines within DOD. They have developed an organizational culture and functional specialization that is, in several important ways, distinct from that of GPF.

1. Organizational Culture

The organizational culture of SOF is much less rooted in the concept of overwhelming force than that of GPF. SOF, even in direct action missions in support of conventional forces, eschew the notion of overwhelming force. In these missions, they rely instead on a theory of relative superiority founded on the principles of surprise, speed, detailed intelligence, and precision.[80] In such missions, SOF does not so much try to destroy the enemy's forces as render them ineffective or irrelevant. SOF culture is characterized by two other principles as well. They are innovation and flexibility. These cultural traits grow largely out of the very nature of special operations and evidence of them can be seen not only in the execution of US

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[80] For a complete treatment of the theory of relative superiority, see McRaven, Chapter 1.

special operations since the 1950s, but the execution of special operations throughout history.

The nature of special operations is such that they usually involve a relatively small force seeking to achieve results in disproportion to their size. In defining special operations, John Arquilla states:

> [special operations are] that class of military (or paramilitary) actions that fall outside the realm of conventional warfare during their respective time periods. This places significant emphasis on the *coup de main* by small forces whose aim is to achieve very substantial effects on the course of a war or international crisis.[81]

This fact, that special operations are usually conducted by a small (relative to the opponent) force implies that overwhelming force and destruction of the enemy's forces, in the traditional GPF sense, is unfeasible. Instead, SOF must rely on the principles stated above; surprise, detailed intelligence, precision, and speed. Evidence of this "indirect" approach can be seen in almost any special operation. In the 1970 raid on Son Tay prison, for example, SOF did not attempt to destroy the air defense forces around the prison, but rather distracted and avoided them.[82] Similarly, in Operation Source, the 1943 midget

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[81] Arquilla, p. ii.
[82] McRaven, p. 297.

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submarine attack on the German Battleship *Tirpitz*, the British raiders did not attempt to fight their way into Kaafjord, they snuck in, relying on surprise.[83]   Indeed, even as far back as antiquity, Odysseus and the his companions relied on an indirect approach to get past the gates of Troy.[84]   The tradition of overcoming superior numbers through the use of various techniques other than overwhelming force has led to the development of and "indirect approach" culture within SOF.

The nature of special operations has fostered the development of the other two traits mentioned above, innovation and flexibility.   The fact that special operations are, as Arquilla defines them, "outside the realm of conventional warfare" implies that they represent an unconventional, or innovative, approach.   Similarly, the fact that special operations rely heavily on surprise for mission success fosters innovation.   Often, surprise can best be achieved through the use of new tactics and techniques.   Evidence of innovation is present in all three examples discussed above.   In the case of Son Tay, innovative "drafting techniques" were developed to increase

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83   Ibid., pp. 201-241.
84   Arquilla, p. v.

helicopter ranges.[85]   In the *Tirpitz* raid case, the midget

submarines were invented specifically for the raid.[86]   And

in the case of Troy, the innovation is obvious! Innovation,

then, has played a significant role in special operations

throughout history and has thus become a cultural trait of

SOF.

Innovation   is   closely   linked   to   flexibility.

Flexibility represents an ability to think creatively and

adapt existing plans, organizations, and techniques to fit

the situation.[87]   That SOF place a high value on flexibility

is clearly demonstrated by recent comments made by General

Downing to Congress.   In his statement before the Senate

Armed Services Committee he stated:

> Since we do not know what future challenges we
> will face, we must create a flexible force that
> can adapt rapidly...this is as much a problem of
> mindset   as   it   is   of   unit   organization   and
> equipment.   Our education system is designed to
> inculcate the necessary frame of mind into our OF
> leadership.[88]

He then closed his remarks by relaying the following

statement, which serves as an example of SOF's high value of

flexibility.

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[85] McRaven, p. 306.
[86] Ibid., p. 202.
[87] FM 100-20, p. 1-5 to 1-6.
[88] Downing statement, p. 24.

In Uganda last year, during the efforts to assist the refugees from Rwanda, an Army Special Forces captain was tasked to introduce American Aid Representatives to the President of Uganda. The captain started off the conversation, introducing himself and greeting the President in the President's own language. This impressed the President greatly and smoothed the introduction of more difficult topics of discussion...The captain had no specific training... on how to deal with these specific situations, but he had been through a lot of training and had experience with a variety of unconventional problems and developed the ability to "think outside the box." When confronted with yet another unconventional problem, he was ready.[89]

To summarize, then, SOF's culture has, at its roots, the principles of innovation, flexibility, and a theory for the use of force based on relative superiority, rather than overwhelming force.

2. Functional Specialization

SOF became a permanent part of the force structure in 1952 with the formation of the Army's Special Forces. Originally, the mission of Special Forces was to conduct, and training others to conduct, guerrilla warfare behind Soviet lines in the event of a European war.[90] Over the past 44 years, however, that narrow specialization has expanded to include UW, as defined in the broadest sense, as

[89] Ibid., p. 24
[90] Weigley, History of the United States Army, p. 543.

well as commando-type operations. Of particular interest here, of course, is their specialization in UW. Evidence of this specialization can be found in the history of SOF since 1952, current doctrine, and their current training and deployments.

SOF's specialization in UW is clearly seen by examining their history. Although SOF was organized in 1952, they remained a small force with a limited mission until the Kennedy administration took office. Under Kennedy, SOF expanded quickly and took on the additional mission of counterinsurgency.[91] Although SOF languished somewhat in the years after Vietnam, they retained their specialization in counterinsurgency and expanded their mission profile further. In the 1970s, when international terrorism began to rise, SOF added the mission of counterterrorism to their repertoire, thus, increasing further their specialization in UW. In the late 1980s, SOF underwent a large revitalization program at the insistence of Congress. This revitalization was intended, among other things to improve the US capability in UW.[92] Thus, throughout their brief history as

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[91] Weigley, The American Way of War, p. 456. See also Krepinevich, pp. 107-112.
[92] Thompson, pp. 12-15.

a distinct organization within DOD, SOF have continuously, and, to a large degree exclusively, been responsible for UW. History is reinforced by current doctrine. Joint Publication 3.05, <u>Doctrine for Joint Special Operations</u> lists seven doctrinal missions for SOF. Those missions are: Direct Action; Special Reconnaissance; Foreign Internal Defense; Counterterrorism; Psychological Operations; Unconventional Warfare; and Civil Affairs. While direct action and special reconnaissance are, admittedly designed primarily for supporting GPF in conventional conflicts, the other five clearly represent a specialization in UW.

Finally, SOF's training exercises and deployments attest to a specialization in UW, especially with regard to Army Special Forces. For example, SOF specific rotations to JRTC focus on Foreign internal defense missions to include training foreign forces in counterinsurgency. Additionally, in fiscal year 1994, SOF teams were deployed to 139 countries around the world in foreign internal defense of other predominately UW roles.

It is perhaps unfair to suggest that SOF has specialized exclusively in UW as it is defined in this study. They have not. They have also specialized in

commando operations an most SOF units split training time between the two types of missions. However, they are clearly specialized in UW to a large degree as the above discussion indicates and even the commando missions for which they train represent an unconventional use of force.

D. IMPLICATIONS FOR INTEGRATED OPERATIONS IN UW

By combining the discussion of organization theory and UW from chapters I and II with the specific organizational cultures and functional specialization of SOF and GPF as described here, it is possible to develop several hypotheses regarding problem solving in integrated operations in UW.

First, one would expect GPF organizations to design solutions consistent with their culture and specialization as described in this chapter. That is one would expect them to design solutions which focus on victory through the defeat of the enemy's armed forces through the use of overwhelming force. Additionally, one would expect that these solutions would reflect the use of overwhelming force as they have conceived of and practiced it in preparation for a European war.

Second, one would expect SOF organizations to design solutions consistent with their culture and specialization.

That is one would expect SOF to design solutions focused on a more indirect approach than those designed by GPF and reflecting their understanding of, and specialization in, UW.

Third, in integrated operations, because of the hierarchical nature of military operations, one would expect the organizational approach of the organization charged with command to dominate.

Finally, because of the nature of UW problems and their solutions as discussed in Chapter II, one would expect SOF to be generally more effective than GPF in designing solutions to UW challenges.

The next step, then, is to test these hypotheses against the American experience in Vietnam.

IV. VIETNAM

Political activities [were] more important than military activities, and fighting less important than propaganda.

--Vo Nguyen Giap[93]

A. INTRODUCTION

The American experience in Vietnam provides an excellent opportunity to test the hypotheses of Chapter III. Several things in particular make the case especially well-suited to the task. First, the American involvement is of sufficient size and duration, and contains enough participation by both SOF and GPF to be analytically useful. Second, the literature on the case, both historical and analytical, is plentiful.[94] Third, Vietnam is far enough in the past to allow relatively more objective analysis, divorced from some of the emotion and bureaucratic influences that sometimes surround more recent cases. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that SOF and GPF operated independently in the early years of the war,

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[93] Vo Nguyen Giap, People's War: People's Army, as cited in Edgar O'Ballance, The Wars in Vietnam: 1954-1980, (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1981) p. 11.

[94] The literature on Vietnam is, indeed, plentiful. Some of the works used in preparation of this case include Andrew Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) Larry Cable, A Conflict of Myths: The Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Wars in Vietnam 1965-8, (New York: New York University Press, 1986) Harry Summers, On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), Robert A. Asprey, War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History, (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1975), and Neil Sheehan, A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam, (New York: Random House, 1988).

and were later integrated under the command of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) allows for clear analysis of the SOF approach, the GPF approach, and the integrated approach to combating the insurgency in South Vietnam. For these reasons, the US experience in Vietnam is the most appropriate place to begin to evaluate the influence of organizational factors on the process of integration at the strategic level.

B. BACKGROUND

As implied above, in terms of integration, one can divide the American experience in Vietnam into two phases. In the first phase, which ran from the mid 1950s to 1963, SOF and GPF operated independently. In the second phase, which ran from 1963 until the end of the war, the two forces were integrated under the unified command and control structure of MACV. This section examines the involvement of SOF and GPF in both phases of the war. Specifically, it focuses on those events which clearly reflect the perceptions, strategy, and tactics of SOF, GPF, and the integrated force. It should be noted, before diving into the case, that what follows is by no means a comprehensive historical account of the war in Vietnam. Indeed, to

accomplish such in a study of this size and scope would be impossible. It is, rather, an attempt to provide a framework within which to evaluate the effects of organizational culture and functional specialization on the development of strategy in Vietnam.

1. Getting Started:

American involvement in Vietnam began much earlier than many realize. It is common to think of 1965, the year large numbers of combat forces were committed, as the beginning of America's participation in the war. In reality, however, American involvement began with the formation of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in 1950.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), began to believe that Indochina was the key to holding Southeast Asia against the communists. As a result, they created the MAAG.[95] MAAG's mission was small at first and consisted primarily of providing liaison with the French, who were deeply involved in fighting Ho Chi Minh's insurgents, and keeping Washington informed. In

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[95] Major Stephen L. Bowman, The United States Army and Counterinsurgency Warfare: The Making of Doctrine 1946-1964, (M.A. Thesis, Duke University, 1980), p. 23.

1954, however, after the infamous French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, things began to change.

The defeat at Dien Bien Phu ensured that the French would leave Vietnam and that it would be sooner rather than later. As a result, primary responsibility for insuring the security of South Vietnam fell to the United States. As a first step towards meeting that new responsibility, the National Security Council (NSC) directed the JCS to develop a Vietnamese defense force capable of providing internal security.[96] The JCS determined that a force of approximately 89,000 men would be required to accomplish the task[97] and the mission of designing and training the force was passed on to MAAG.

In December 1954, the MAAG Chief, Lieutenant General (LTG) John W. O'Daniel, and Vietnamese Minister of Defense Ho Thong Minh meet to negotiate the force structure. The agreement they reached called for the creation of three

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[96] In September of 1954 a debate arose in Washington between the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the CIA as to the nature of the threat faced by South Vietnam and the type of security forces required to counter that threat. The JCS believed the threat was primarily external and that Vietnamese defense forces should be organized and trained accordingly. The CIA, particularly Allen Dulles, believed the threat was internal and that the defense forces should be organized and trained to deal with the insurgency rather than an invasion from the North. The CIA view eventually won out and the JCS were directed to define the force levels required for providing internal security. MAAG was the organization ultimately charged with developing the resulting 100,000 man force recommended by the JCS and authorized by the NSC. For a more complete discussion of this debate see Krepinevich, p. 20.
[97] Krepinevich, p. 20.

territorial divisions and three field divisions.[98]   The
territorial divisions consisted of 13 locally trained and
recruited regiments designed primarily for assisting the
civil authorities with internal security operations.   The
field divisions, on the other hand, were designed to be more
"strategically mobile" than the territorial divisions and to
provide defense against an invasion from the North until
reinforcements from the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
(SEATO) could be rushed to the scene.   Interestingly enough,
the Diem regime favored the creation of more territorial
divisions over the heavier field divisions.   This
preference, however, was overridden by MAAG and since the US
was footing the bill, Diem had little choice but to
accept.[99]

Over the next five years, this initial force structure
changed dramatically.   Under the direction of MAAG the Army
of the Republic of Vietnam evolved into a conventional force
which mirrored almost exactly the structure and methods of
operation of the US Army.   When the National Security
Council raised the manpower allocation for the Army of the
Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) to 150,000 in 1955, MAAG scrapped

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[98] Ibid., p. 20-21.
[99] Ibid., p. 22.

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the three territorial divisions in favor of six new "light" divisions. The light divisions were organized more along the lines of American divisions and were no longer regionally oriented. One additional field division was added, as well, bringing the total number of divisions to 10: six light and four field. By 1959, more changes had occurred. The light divisions had been further transformed into "standard" infantry divisions, which were heavier, and the field divisions had become armored cavalry regiments. Thus by 1959, the ARVN force structure closely resembled that of the US Army. As General Samuel Myers noted:

> We had the TO&Es (tables of organization and equipment) of the US translated into Vietnamese and issued through the Vietnamese army, and I don't recall any major variations.[100]

In addition to creating a force which looked like the American Army, MAAG created a force which fought like it as well. The emphasis in training was on conventional, division and corps level, operations. That this was, in fact, the case is clearly evidenced by a statement by Major General (MG) Ruggles, the deputy MAAG commander from 1957-

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[100] Interview with General Samuel L. Myers conducted by the Center for Military History, Washington, DC, 8 February 1980. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 23.

1959. In referring to LTG Samuel Willaims, the MAAG commander who replace O'Daniel, Ruggles stated:

> He was bound that he was going to terminate his assignment out there with corps maneuvers, because that is what he was sent out there to do, organize an army that could resist aggression from the North. And he had those maneuvers before he left, and...the units did very, very well.[101]

As MAAG organized and trained the ARVN, the insurgency in South Vietnam continued to grow. The civil authorities were increasingly overwhelmed and the ARVN was called on to assist in counterinsurgency with ever increasing frequency. As a result, MAAG's mission grew from one of simply designing and training the ARVN to one of recommending a strategy for employing them against the insurgents as well.

2. Fighting the Insurgency

In September 1960, LTG Lionel C. McGarr, former commandant of the Army's Command and General Staff College, assumed command of MAAG. Faced with the formal establishment of the National Liberation Front and the activation of the Peoples Liberation Armed Forces in that same year, McGarr and MAAG began to develop a counterinsurgency plan for 1961. The plan focused primarily

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[101] Interview with Major General Ruggles by the Center for Military History, Washington DC, 27 February 1980. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 23.

on offensive operations designed to destroy guerrilla forces in the field.[102] In describing the plan, McGarr wrote that the objective was to "find, fix, and finish the enemy."[103] He further informed the MAAG advisors operating with the ARVN that:

> Wars are won through offensive operations. Therefore, you must...bring the VC [Viet Cong guerrillas] to battle at a time, place, and in a manner of the RVNAF's [Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces'] choosing.[104]

In spite of the increased involvement of MAAG and the ARVN in counterinsurgency operations and efforts to "find, fix, and finish the enemy," the guerrillas continued to gain strength. In September 1961, Theodore H. White reported in a letter to President Kennedy that:

> The situation gets worse almost week by week. The guerrillas now control all the southern delta, so much so that I could find no American who would drive me outside Saigon in his car even by day without military convoy.[105]

In response to the worsening situation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sought to upgrade MAAG. In November 1961 they proposed the creation of the Military Assistance

[102] Krepinevich, p. 56.
[103] Commander, MAAG-Vietnam, "Tactics and Techniques for Counterinsurgent Operations," 10 February 1962, p. 3. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 57.
[104] BDM Corporation, A Study of the Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, Vol. 6, book I, p. 135, (McLean, Virginia). Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 58.
[105] Mike Gravel, ed., The Senator Gavel Edition: The Pentagon Papers, 5 Vols. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), Vol. 2, p. 70.

Command, Vietnam. The proposal was approved and on February 8, 1962 MACV was activated under the command of General Paul Harkins, an armor officer who had achieved notoriety in World War II while serving under George Patton. MACV's role was similar to that of its predecessor MAAG. Its mission was to "assist the Government of South Vietnam in defeating the communist insurgency."[106]

The approach MACV took towards countering the insurgency was also similar to MAAG's. The focus on destroying the enemy's field forces remained in place.[107] As Krepinevich points out, "Priority was given to the destruction of guerrilla forces through large-scale operations."[108] The ARVN virtually never operated below battalion level and their attempts to counter the insurgents were usually accompanied by heavy doses of artillery and air support. That this was, in fact, the approach taken by MACV is perhaps most clearly evidenced in Neil Sheehan's <u>A Bright Shining Lie</u>. In discussing Lieutenant Colonel John Paul Van's views during his first year as a MACV advisor, Sheehan states:

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[106] Krepinevich, p. 64.
[107] For a detailed discussion of the strategy of attrition developed by GPF through MACV see Krepinevich, p. 164-168. See also Thompson and Frizzle, Chapter V, "The Strategy of Attrition," pp. 73-107.
[108] Ibid., p. 56.

Because he [Vann] saw the solution to the conflict primarily in military terms during his first year in Vietnam, Vann focused on the initial priority he and [Colonel Daniel Boone] Porter had agreed upon--the destruction of the main striking forces of the Viet Cong through surprise helicopter assaults...The quickest way to halt the momentum of this revolution, Vann believed, was to break the point of the spear. If the regular or provincial guerrillas were killed off or scattered, the communists would no longer be able to mass a force for big ambushes of road convoys and of Saigon's territorial troops as they marched through the countryside during the day trying to assert the regime's authority.[109]

While Vann later changed his views, MACV continued throughout 1962 and 1963 to try and "break the point of the spear." In 1962, for example, MACV's operations officer Brigadier General (BG) Kelleher stated "MACV's mission is to kill VC, plain and simple."[110]

The above statements by Krepinevich and Sheehan also reveal that MACV pursued their attempts to "kill VC" through conventional doctrine and tactics. Regiment and division operations were the norm.[111] Furthermore, MACV made extensive use of helicopters and air mobile operations to attempt to surprise and "fix" guerrillas. These operations,

[109] Sheehan, p. 66.
[110] David Halberstam, The Making of a Quagmire, (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 60. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 64.
[111] BDM Corporation, A Study of the Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, Vol. 6, Book 1, "Operational Analysis," (McLean, Virginia., 1980), p. 135. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 58.

as mentioned above, were almost always preceded by air strikes and artillery fires.[112]

While it focused primarily on destroying the guerrilla forces in the field, MACV did participate in attempts at pacification as well. The strategic Hamlet program, which began in January 1962, is a case in point.

The program grew out of two separate plans, one proposed by MAAG (MACV had not yet activated) and one proposed by the British advisory team headed by the well known counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson. MACV's plan consisted of three phases. The first phase involved training political cadre and gathering intelligence on the areas targeted for pacification. The second phase called for large-scale sweep operations conducted by the ARVN to defeat or drive out VC guerrillas in the target areas. In phase three, the ARVN was to hand over control of the areas to the civil guard and the self defense corps who would, in turn, establish permanent security. MAAG proposed that the plan begin by pacifying the six provinces closest to Saigon. It believed these six provinces as well as Kontum province could be pacified by the end of 1961 or, at the latest,

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[112] Sheehan, p. 106.

early 1962.[113] The priority would then shift to the Mekong

Delta and the Central Highlands and the rest of the country

would follow.   All together, MAAG envisioned the entire

country being pacified by the end of 1964.   MAAG's plan,

however, was not adopted as such.

The Diem regime preferred the plan proposed by Thompson

and the British, which differed from MAAG's plan in several

ways.   It focused primarily on the implementation of strict

security measures by the civil guard and the self defense

corps similar to the methods the British had employed in

Malaya.   The ARVN was to play a supporting, rather than a

leading, role.   Furthermore, Thompson proposed that the

program begin in an area of weak VC activity, not the

insurgent strongholds in the provinces surrounding Saigon.[114]

The plan that was eventually implemented as the Strategic

Hamlet program was a compromise between the British and

American plans.

As mentioned above, Diem preferred the British

proposal, but LTG McGarr, the MAAG chief, voiced some strong

objections.   He was first concerned that the British plan

neglected the VC stronghold in War Zone D, northeast of

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[113] Krepinevich, p. 66.
[114] Ibid., p. 67.

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Saigon.[115] McGarr further objected to the secondary role of the ARVN, the lack of offensive operations, and the slow rate of progress that Thompson had proposed.[116] As a result of these objections, Thompson's plan was modified somewhat and on 19 March 1962, the Strategic Hamlet Program began with an ARVN sweep through Binh Duong province to the north of Saigon.

The operation, code named Sunrise, was something less than a rousing success. The area was heavily infested with VC and it was close to their support bases.[117] This was not so much a problem for the ARVN conducting their sweep, but it was a problem for the civil forces who had the mission of following up and rooting out the VC infrastructure. Additionally, the plan called for the forced resettlement of much of the local population. This combined with the way in which the resettlement was carried out left the local peasants, whom the program was designed to win over, felling more alienated from the regime than ever.[118]

The shortcomings in Operation Sunrise were repeated elsewhere as the Strategic Hamlet Program grew. MAAG and,

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[115] Gravel, vol. 2, p. 141. See also Krepinevich, p. 67.
[116] Ibid., vol. 2: p. 142-143.
[117] Krepinevich, p. 67.
[118] Ibid., p. 68.

later, MACV continued to be interested primarily in the military sweep operations. Very little support or attention was provided to the civil guard or the self defense forces who had the mission of providing long term security. This is evidenced by the fact that every ARVN battalion had an American advisor while only one advisor at the province level was assigned to the civil security forces. Additionally, there was no unified command structure for the Strategic Hamlet program.[119] Each province directed its own efforts and set its own priorities. In spite of complaints from the US advisors, MACV never made any serious attempts to fix this problem. Finally, that MACV focused more on the military search and destroy operations than the actual development of the hamlets is evidenced by its tolerance of blatant falsification of progress reports by the Government of Vietnam. Less than one month after the program began, the Vietnamese government was reporting over 1,300 fortified hamlets. In September, six months after the program began, 2,500 Hamlets were being reported as operational. When Diem was assassinated in November 1963, less than two years into the program, the total number of Hamlets reported was over

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[119] Ibid., p. 69.

8,000.[120] Most of these so called strategic hamlets were fortified and operational on paper only. This, too, was reported to MACV through its provincial advisors but, again, no serious attempt was made to challenge the Vietnamese governments assertions or correct the situation on the ground.

As Krepinevich points out, MACV's response to the Strategic Hamlet program can be characterized as indifferent at best. It supported the program in so far as it provided an opportunity to conduct military operations to destroy guerrilla forces, but it paid little attention to long-term pacification, the supposed purpose of the program.

3. The CIA and Army Special Forces

The strategic Hamlet Program was not the only attempt at pacification, however. In late 1961, Army Special Forces began to implement the Civilian Irregular Defense Group program. The program was originally conceived by the CIA with the goal of denying the VC access to food, supplies, recruits, and intelligence in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.[121] Because of ethnic and racial tensions between

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[120] Gravel, vol. 2, p. 150. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 69.
[121] Robert Rheault, The Special Forces and the CIDG Program, in Thompson and Frizzell, pp. 246-249. See also Krepinevich, pp. 69-71.

the tribes of the Highlands and the Vietnamese government, the program was run solely by Americans, in the form of the CIA and the Special Forces, and only loosely connected to the Strategic Hamlet Program.[122] Although the program was conceived and funded by the CIA, the task of designing a specific strategy and implementing it fell to the Special Forces.[123] In November 1961, two Special Forces (SF) A-Detachments were deployed from the 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa and the program got off the ground.

The strategy developed by the SF was dubbed the Village Defense Program and was simple and defensive in nature. The A-Detachments began to arm and train highlands tribesmen to protect themselves against the VC. The SF detachments would locate themselves in an area, become familiar with the people and the local villages, and begin to prepare simple defenses. First, they would recruit and train a small "strike force" made up of local villagers. This paramilitary-military strike force was designed and trained to provide local villages with a full time security force. They would typically provide reinforcement to villages under attack, patrol between villages, and set ambushes for VC.

[122] Ibid., p. 247-251.
[123] Ibid., p. 247.

Once the SF had established an effective strike force, they would begin to train "village defenders." These groups received basic training in weapons handling and were taught to defend and fortify their own villages. They fought only when their village was under direct attack and each village was provided a simple radio with which to contact the SF teams and the strike force for reinforcement in the event of trouble. Once the village defenders were established, the SF teams supervised programs to improve the quality of life for villagers. They established infirmaries and provided minor medical treatment, constructed shelters, and generally helped in any way they could. As soon as a mutually supporting cluster of villages had been established, the process began all over again and the perimeter pushed out further to include other villages.

The success of the two A-Detachments was extraordinary and by April 1962, forty villages in Darlac Province had voluntarily entered the program.[124] In May of 1962, eight more teams were sent from Okinawa to Vietnam and the success continued. In July, the CIA requested 16 more SF teams and by August, approximately 200 villages were participating in

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[124] Krepinevich, p. 70.

the program.[125]   Overall, the Special Forces' defensive strategy, focused on denying the Viet Cong access to the indigenous population and the resources they provided, seemed to be working well.   It differed markedly from the Strategic Hamlet Program in that it was able to provide an effective presence, rather than simply a paper presence, and it involved no forced resettlement.

4. MACV in Charge

As the size and scope of the CIDG program continued to grow, the decision was made to switch control from the CIA to MACV.   The decision was based primarily on the growing numbers of SF troops involved and the overt, rather than covet, nature of the operations.   Code named Operation Switchback, the transfer was completed by July 1963 and once MACV was in command, both the missions assigned to Special Forces and the way in which the CIDG program was executed began to change.

MACV was generally unhappy with the way in which the Special Forces had been employed under the CIA.   It viewed their employment in the CIDG Program as "static training activities" and felt that they would be better utilized in

[125] Ibid., p. 71.

more "active and offensive operations."[126] As a result, Army

SF were largely removed from their role in administering and

expanding the CIDG Program. They were assigned, instead,

the missions of providing surveillance along the Cambodian

and Laotian borders and conducting offensive, direct action,

missions against VC bases.[127] This change in mission began

in late 1963 and was completed by the end of 1964. On 1

January 1965, Colonel John H. Speers, the commander of the

newly organized 5th Special Forces Group, issued a letter of

instruction outlining the missions assigned to the Group by

MACV. They were listed as:

> Border   surveillance   and   control,   operations
> against   infiltration   routes,   and   operations
> against VC war zones and base areas.[128]

All   of   these   missions   clearly   reflected   MACV's

offensive strategy which focused on finding, fixing, and

destroying the enemy forces in the field.

In addition to reorienting the Special Forces, MACV was

making changes to the CIDG Program as well. In order to

free-up US Special Forces for offensive operations and

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[126] Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Army Staff, cable, LTG Barksdale Hamlett to General Collins, 15 August 1962, Center for Military History. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 72.
[127] Rheault, p. 250. See also Krepinevich, p. 72.
[128] Headquarters, 5th United States Army Special Forces Group, Letter of Instruction Number I, "The Special Forces Counterinsurgency Program," 1 January, 1965, Center for Military History. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 75.

border surveillance, the responsibility of training strike forces and village defenders as well as the responsibility for administering the program was transferred to the Vietnamese Special Forces. Unfortunately, they were nowhere near as capable as their US counterparts.[129] Not only were they less capable in terms of their own skills and leadership, but they tended to be insensitive, indifferent, or both, to the needs of the minority populations that the CIDG Program had focused on. Thus, many of the gains made earlier in "winning" the population were lost.

A second change in the program occurred as well. The Government of Vietnam decided to integrate the strike forces of the CIDG Program into the ARVN.[130] It is not clear weather MACV recommended this change or simply allowed it to happen, but, whichever the case, it was not long before MACV began employing them in ways for which they were never intended. They, like the US Special Forces, began to be used in a more offensive role. It became common for strike forces to be airlifted from one place to another either in support of Special Forces raid or surveillance missions or in support of conventional ARVN operations. For example, in

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[129] Krepinevich, p. 72.
[130] Ibid., p. 72.

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October 1963, MACV unveiled a plan to use CIDG strike forces, in conjunction with SF, to "attack VC base camps and interdict the infiltration of men and supplies from North Vietnam."[131] Removing the strike forces from their local area of operations and employing them in areas unfamiliar to them drastically reduced their effectiveness and perverted the purpose for which they were created. Not only did removing them from their local areas of operation weaken the mutually supporting village defense system the program had originally created, but without detailed knowledge of the local terrain, strike forces became little more than marginally trained infantry.

MACV also attempted to expand the program rapidly. It did so partly out of a desire to exploit the success of the program and partly to increase the military utility it received from CIDG camps and villages. CIDG camps began to be located for strictly military reasons. As Colonel Robert Rheault, a former commander of the 5th Special Forces Group wrote:

> As it spread to other areas, the program began to be bastardized. Military authorities wanted a camp in a certain area for military reasons with

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[131] Krepinevich, p. 73.

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no regard to the political or demographic facts of life.[132]

Camps were often set astride suspected infiltration routes or placed in areas of heavy VC activity, neither of which served the original purpose of population control.

By the start of 1965, the CIDG program had been fully integrated with the Strategic Hamlet Program and, unfortunately, the former took on most of the characteristics of the later.

5. The US Sends Combat Troops

In spite of the best efforts of MACV, the ARVN, and all the other governmental agencies involved, both US and Vietnamese, the situation in Vietnam continued to grow worse. By the end of 1964 the Viet Cong were beginning to conduct coordinated regimental operations. In early January 1965, the insurgents attacked and seized the village of Binh Gia only 40 miles from Saigon. In reclaiming the town, ARVN forces suffered 201 men killed in action (KIA) compared with only 32 confirmed VC KIAs (the official estimate was 132). This event and others like it ultimately lead to the commitment of US troops to combat in Vietnam.[133]

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[132] Rheault, p. 250.

[133] Some have argued that the commitment of US combat troops was as much a result of political and bureaucratic considerations as it was the ground tactical situation. While this study is not so much

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The strategy MACV pursued with US troops was not unlike the one it had pursued with the ARVN. It was essentially a strategy of attrition.[134] MACV and General William Westmoreland, who had assumed command from Harkins on 20 June 1964, believed that the ARVN had failed to stem the tide of the insurgency because they lacked an "offensive" spirit and the will to engage the enemy in sustained combat. As Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor noted:

> The Vietnamese have the manpower and the basic skills to win this war. What they lack is motivation.[135]

MACV, however, had no doubts about the ability or motivation of US forces. They would certainly take the fight to the enemy and succeed where the ARVN had failed. MACV's attitude and approach to the employment of US troops is perhaps best summarized by Krepinevich who states:

> The Army remained convinced that the essence of the conflict was military, not political. Politics would take a back seat while the Army inflicted sufficient damage on the insurgents to force them to the peace table. Once it became clear that US ground combat forces were necessary to prevent the fall of South Vietnam to the

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interested in why troops were committed as the strategy they employed once they arrived, Krepinevich provides an interesting discussion in Chapter 5, "Forty-four Battalions across the Rubicon," pp. 131-163.

[134] The Overall strategy for employing US forces in Vietnam is almost unanimously referred to as a strategy of attrition in the literature. For example, Krepinevich, Cable, Thompson and Frizzell, Summers all refer to it as such. Even General William Westmoreland in "A Military War of Attrition" in Thompson and Frizzell, pp. 57-71 refers to it as such.

[135] Cable, Maxwell Taylor to the President, 5 January 1965, Center for Military History. Also cited in Krepinevich, p. 135.

Communists, the Army's primary concern was the deployment of forces to execute the same strategy that the ARVN had been failing at for years, only with greater resources and increased intensity.[136]

The tactics with which US forces pursued the strategy of attrition were also similar to those used by the ARVN in years before. Search-and-destroy missions remained the *modus operendi* as did the use of large-unit operations and an emphasis on air mobility to surprise and "fix" the enemy. The first division to be completely deployed to Vietnam was, in fact, was the Ist Air Cavalry Division. Furthermore, once in country, it was immediately deployed to the Central Highlands, where the insurgency was the strongest, to began search and destroy operations; the results of which only served to reinforce the Army's belief that attrition was an appropriate strategy.[137] When the Ist Cav moved into the Central Highlands in November of 1965, they almost immediately encountered a large concentration of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese in the Ia Drang Valley. The ensuing battle was one of the bloodiest of the war and the use of American firepower resulted in 1,200 enemy KIAs versus a comparatively low 200 for the Ist Cavalry. The victory

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[136] Krepinevich, p. 131.
[137] Ibid., p. 169.

served largely to reinforce MACV's views that the war could be won through attrition and that the source of the problem was North Vietnam.

From Ia Drang, MACV never looked back. From that point forward it pursued its strategy of attrition through the application of firepower relentlessly right up to the beginning of the withdrawal of US troops.[138] That is not to say, however, that there were not attempts at alternative strategies, there were, but they were not initiated by MACV and the command generally tolerated them more than it embraced them.

One such alternative strategy was developed by the Marines and referred to as the Combined Action Platoons (CAPs) Program. The strategy of CAPs was not unlike that of the Special Forces in the CIDG Program. A platoon of Marines would establish a presence in a village, get to know the local population, and provide protection from the VC. They would work hard to establish local intelligence nets and assist in training the local police forces, shifting more responsibility over to them as they became more capable. The results, as well, were similar to those of the

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[138] Ibid., pp. 169-172.

CIDG Program in the early days under the SF. By 1966, there were 57 CAPs operating in villages in the Ist Corps tactical zone.

MACV was, however, less than enthusiastic about the Marines program and to a large degree considered it ineffective because it did not produce the number of VC casualties that Army search and destroy operations did. MG Dupey, MACV's Operations Officer, stated:

> The Marines came in and just sat down and didn't do anything. They were involved in counterinsurgency of the deliberate, mild sort.[139]

General Harry Kinnard, the commander of the Ist Cavalry during the Ia Drang battle and latter a MACV staff officer, remarked:

> I did everything I could to drag them out and get them to fight...They just wouldn't play. *They just would not play*. They don't know how to fight on land, particularly against guerrillas.[140]

Ironically, judging from their success, the Marines seem to have known much more about fighting guerrillas on land than either of the two officers quoted above.

A second alternative to attrition surfaced in May of 1967 with the initiation of the Civil Operations and

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[139] Interview of William Dupey by Krepinevich, 26 March, 1979, as cited in Krepinevich, p. 175.
[140] Interview of Harry Kinnard by Krepinevich, 21 June 1982, as cited in Krepinevich, p. 175.

Revolutionary Support Program (CORDS). The program came about as a result of Defense Secretary McNamara and President Johnson's growing feelings that the military strategy was ineffective and that more needed to be done in the area of pacification. At the direction of President Johnson, responsibility for pacification was given directly to MACV. Additionally, Robert Komer, the President's special assistant for pacification, was sent to Vietnam as the Deputy Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, with the rank of Ambassador. The placement of Komer high in the MACV chain of command and the personal interest of the President resulted in some significant improvements in the pacification program. For the first time, a unified chain of command for pacification activities was developed and pacification activities were closely coordinated with military activities. Komer was also able to gain access to the considerable resources of MACV in implementing pacification programs. Training for the paramilitary police forces was improved, and targeting of the VC infrastructure increased, most notably through the Phoenix Program.[141]

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[141] The Phoenix Program was an effort to oversee and assist the efforts of district and province intelligence organizations to identify, locate and eliminate VC cadre. For an excellent detailed account of

The implementation of CORDS, however, did not change MACV's focus on the "shooting war." It supported Komer and CORDS, but still believed the path to victory was through the destruction of the VC field forces. This is perhaps most clearly evidenced by a statement made by LTG Julian Ewell, a corps commander who commented:

> I had two rules. One is that you would try to get a very close meshing of pacification...and military operations. The other rule is the military operations would be given first priority in every case. That does not mean that you wouldn't do pacification, but this gets at what you might call winning the hearts and minds of the people. I'm all for that. Its a nice concept, but in fighting the Viet Cong and the NVA [North Vietnamese Army], if you don't break their military machine, you might as well forget winning the hearts and minds of the people.[142]

Thus, it is fairly clear that from the time US troops were committed in 1965 to the time they began to be withdrawn, the focus of MACV remained on pursuing a strategy of attrition by attempting to destroy the Viet Cong field forces.

C. ANALYSIS

The American experience in Vietnam strongly supports the hypotheses of Chapter III. In the early years of the

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the program, see Dale Andrade, Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990).

[142] Interview of Julian J. Ewell by Krepinevich, 10 April 1979, as cited in Krepinevich, p. 222.

war, when GPF and SOF were operating independently, the way in which each organization attempted to solve the UW problem posed by the insurgency in the South clearly reflected their respective cultures and specialization (Hypothesis one and two). When the two forces were integrated in 1963 under GPF command, the way in which the integrated force attempted to solve the insurgency reflected the culture and specialization of GPF (Hypothesis three). Finally, the approach taken by SOF acting independently in the early years more closely resembled an appropriate UW solution as discussed in Chapter II, and was largely more successful than was the GPF approach or the integrated approach (Hypothesis four). To see that this was, in fact, the case, consider each hypothesis more closely.

1. Evaluating Hypothesis One

One would expect GPF to design solutions to UW problems consistent with their organizational culture and functional specialization. That is, one would expect them to design solutions which focus on victory through the defeat of the enemy's armed forces through the use of overwhelming force as conceived of and practiced in preparation for a European war. (See p. 72)

In the American experience in Vietnam, GPF, as an organization, was represented by first MAAG and, later, MACV. That MAAG and MACV were, in fact, GPF organizations

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is clearly evidenced by the fact that the advisors assigned to them came from GPF backgrounds and received no special or additional training prior to assuming their new duties. Not only were the advisors GPF personnel, but the commanding officers were as well. The background and experience of LTG McGarr and LTG Harkins, for example, were overwhelmingly conventional. Thus, while MAAG and MACV may not have been GPF units in the traditional sense, they were, none-the-less, *de facto* GPF organizations. Therefore, the solution to the insurgency in Vietnam adopted by MAAG and MACV represents the solution adopted by GPF. In light of this fact, it is easy to see how the American experience in Vietnam clearly supports the first hypothesis.

To demonstrate that the solution adopted by MAAG and MACV from 1954-1963 was, in fact, consistent with the organizational culture and functional specialization of GPF is a fairly straightforward matter. It is clearly evidenced by the way in which MAAG developed and trained the ARVN and the way it, and later MACV, employed the ARVN against the insurgency in the South.

Consider first the development of the ARVN. In spite of the fact that the mission given to MAAG by the NSC

through the JCS was to develop a force capable of providing internal security for Vietnam, MAAG developed a relatively heavy force trained in conventional division and corps warfighting tactics. Furthermore, it did so largely over the objections of the Diem regime and against the basic tenants of counterinsurgency doctrine, both of which favored the smaller regional forces present in the initial 1954 force structure. The fact that MAAG organized and trained a conventional army better suited to defending against external aggression than internal insurgency, in spite of being given a mission to the contrary, clearly reflects the influence of GPF functional specialization in European war.

Consider also the strategy and tactics of MAAG and MACV for dealing with the insurgency. As the situation grew worse and the ARVN were called on more frequently to combat the insurgency, the strategy of MAAG and MACV continually focused on offensive operations designed to destroy the insurgents main guerrilla forces. Furthermore, MAAG and MACV advocated the use of heavy firepower, in the form of artillery and air support, in ARVN search and destroy operations. They continued to do so even in the face of objections by several of MAAG's and MACV's own advisors that

these tactics were counterproductive to the counterinsurgency effort.[143] Thus, the strategy and tactics used by MAAG and MACV matched exactly the theory of victory embodied in GPF culture and the tactics that had been successful in two World Wars and Korea.

Even when MAAG and MACV made attempts at employing more traditional counterinsurgency doctrine, such as pacification, their culture and specialization were evident. The plan proposed by MAAG for pacification in 1961, foe example, focused on large-unit sweeps and concentrated on areas of heavy VC infestation (see p. 85). Similarly, the objections raised by LTG McGarr to Sir Robert Thompson's pacification plan also reflect a focus on the destruction of the enemy's field forces through the use of offensive operations. Finally, the inattention of MAAG and MACV to the way in which the Strategic Hamlet Program was administered, once it was implemented, reflect the feeling that the program was less important than efforts to destroy guerrillas in the field.

Clearly, then, the solution GPF designed for the UW problem posed by the insurgency in South Vietnam was, in

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[143] See Sheehan, pp. 106-117. See also Krepinevich, pp. 80-84.

fact, overwhelmingly consistent with their organizational culture and functional specialization.

2. Evaluating Hypothesis Two

One would expect SOF organizations to design solutions to UW problems consistent with their culture and specialization. That is, one would expect SOF to design solutions focused on a more indirect approach than those designed by GPF and reflecting their understanding of, and specialization in, UW. (See p. 73)

The validity of hypothesis two, like that of hypothesis one, is fairly easily demonstrated in the case of Vietnam. To see that the SOF solution to the problem posed by the insurgency was, in fact, more indirect than the GPF solution and reflected an understanding of, and specialization in, UW one need only examine the way in which the Army Special Forces designed and implemented the CIDG Program.

The CIDG Program represented an indirect approach in that it focused on denying the VC access to the population and the corresponding resources rather than defeating the guerrillas in the field. Guerrillas were targeted only in so far as necessary to allow the Special Forces to maintain an effective presence and protect the population. Essentially, the SF would achieve a form of relative superiority in a single village at a time, rather than

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relying on overwhelming force to defeat the entire guerrilla force in the field. The goal was not so much to destroy the VC, but rather to render them irrelevant to the villages within the CIDG Program.

The SOF solution also demonstrates their cultural principles of innovation and flexibility, as well as their functional specialization in UW. While it is true that the SF were not specialized in counterinsurgency per se in the early 1960s, they were specialized in training partisan guerrilla forces (UW as it is narrowly defined in doctrine). This specialization gave them an appreciation for the importance of language and culture in both being able to train a local population and being able to effectively develop ties to them. Meanwhile, their ability to innovate allowed them to adapt their skills in training partisan forces into an appropriate, form of counterinsurgency.

Thus, the SOF approach to solving the insurgency was clearly different than the GPF approach and did, in fact, reflect the organizational culture and functional specialization of SOF. It clearly demonstrates an indirect approach as well as an ability to innovate, or, as General

Downing has characterized it, an ability to "Think outside the box."

3. Evaluating Hypothesis Three

In Integrated Operations, because of the hierarchical nature of military operations, one would expect the organizational approach of the organization charged with command to dominate. (See p. 73)

Once again, as in the case of hypothesis one and two, the American experience in Vietnam provides strong evidence in support of this hypothesis. In 1963, through operation Switchback, SOF and GPF were integrated under the unified command and control structure of MACV. Almost immediately afterward, the way in which SOF were employed began to change. In spite of their previous success, they were largely removed from the CIDG Program by MACV, who viewed their participation in it as "static training activities" of little value, and employed instead in more offensive, direct action missions. As the letter of instruction from Colonel Speers quoted earlier indicated, their new missions were defined as border surveillance and control, operations against infiltration routes, and operations against VC war zones and base areas. These new missions clearly indicate the dominance of the GPF approach based on the destruction

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of the enemy's field forces.   After the integration of

SOF and GPF in 1963, the GPF approach continued to dominate

throughout the rest of the war.   CAPs and CORDS represent

other attempts at pacification as an alternative approach,

but neither was initiated or embraced by MACV.

Thus, integrated operations in Vietnam clearly show

that the approach of the organization in command dominated.

Andrew   Krepinevich perhaps summed up the integrated

approach best when he wrote:

> In effect, MACV was getting Special Forces out of
> the counterinsurgency business and into supporting
> large-scale operations to combat the external
> threat.[144]

4. Evaluating Hypothesis Four

*Because of the nature of UW problems and their
solutions as discussed in Chapter II, one would
expect SOF to be generally more effective than GPF
in designing solutions to UW challenges.* (See p.
73)

Was the SOF solution in the form of the CIDG Program

more effective than the GPF solution based on destruction of

the enemy's guerrilla forces in the field?   Perhaps the best

way to demonstrate that it was is to discuss each solution

in terms of the two models for thinking about the dynamics

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[144] Krepinevich, p. 74.

of, and appropriate solutions to, UW discussed in Chapter II.

Consider, first, the "Mystic Triangle" (see Fig 1, p. 45). The CIDG Program, or SOF strategy, contained all three components of effective strategy suggested by the model. First, through an effective presence and limited civic action programs, it developed ties to the "society." Second, through that same presence, it was able to break the VC's ties to the society in a particular village. Third, the use of force against the VC directly was measured and discriminate. Local strike forces and village defenders made minimum use of firepower and waited for the VC to come to them, thus eliminating the targeting problem often associated with combating guerrillas.

The GPF strategy, on the other hand, contained only one component of effective strategy; operations against the counter-state or VC. Furthermore, the fact that this component was pursued through the application of heavy firepower meant that the results were often counterproductive. By applying force in a non-discriminate manner, the GPF strategy often served to strengthen the VC

ties to society and weaken their own.[145]   Thus, in terms of

the "Mystic Triangle," the SOF strategy was obviously more

effective.

Consider, now, the Leites/Wolf Model (see Fig 2, p.

47). Once again, the SOF strategy employed, to one extent

or the other, each of the four counter strategies suggested

by the model.   It denied the VC endogenous inputs by

restricting access to the population; it targeted the VC

"conversion mechanism" by eliminating the VC infrastructure

in the villages in the Program; it targeted "outputs"

through the use of strike forces and village defenders; and,

finally, the program increased the ability of the population

to absorb punishment by hardening villages and implementing

modest civic programs.

The GPF strategy, in comparison to the SOF strategy,

effectively contained only two of the four counter

strategies outlined by the model.   The dominant strategy

employed by GPF was obviously the destruction of outputs.

Again, however, the way in which this strategy was pursued,

through the indiscriminate use of firepower, was often

counterproductive.   The second strategy employed by GPF was

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[145]   Sheehan, pp. 106-117 and Krepinevich, pp. 80-84.

an attempt to limit exogenous inputs. This was done through attempts to seal the Laotian and Cambodian borders and through the air campaign against the North. No serious attempt was made by GPF to target the "conversion mechanism" or increase the ability of the population to absorb abuse.[146]

Thus, if one considers the requirements of an effective UW solution as they are outlined in Chapter II, the evidence strongly supports the assertion that the SOF approach was more appropriate and effective than the GPF approach.

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[146] The Phoenix Program was an attempt to target the VC infrastructure, but it did not begin until 1968 and was implemented under the CORDS program. The Military side of MACV never attempted to target the infrastructure.

V. CONCLUSIONS

War is a strange sea, and once embarked upon, there is no foretelling where the voyage may lead. But it is not less true, and almost invariably the case, that when the thing is badly begun, from a false and misleading premise, the blunders will accumulate--that is more likely than the possibility of a new sense of direction and ultimate recovery.

--Winston Churchill[147]

A. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the application of organization theory to the process of integration at the strategic level, and the evidence provided by the American experience in Vietnam, this study draws three conclusions. First, that organizational culture and functional specialization do, in fact, influence the way in which military organizations perceive and solve problems. Second, this study concludes that in integrated operations, the organizational culture and functional specialization of the organization in command is likely to have the dominant influence on the development of campaign strategy. Third, the study finds that the organizational culture and functional specialization of SOF,

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[147] Winston Churchill, as cited in S.L.A. Marshall, "Thoughts on Vietnam," in Thompson and Frizzell, p. 46.

are more consistent with the strategies and tactics required to solve UW problems than are those of GPF.

These conclusions, when taken together, imply that in UW operations, the conventional wisdom regarding integrated operations is flawed; that by subordinating SOF to GPF, the probability that the integrated force will design and implement an appropriate UW solution is greatly reduced. This, in turn, implies that changes in the way the US organizes its forces for combat in UW operations should be considered.

B. THE PROBLEM WITH THE CURRENT COMMAND STRUCTURE

The problem with the current command structure, as it exists in the form of the unified command plan, is that it perpetuates the conventional wisdom of subordinating SOF to GPF in integrated operations. Virtually all the warfighting headquarters, in the form of theater CINCs and the JTFs they establish to fight campaigns, are GPF organizations.[148]

Consider, for example, the five regionally oriented unified commands. By virtue of the fact that the world is

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[148] The five unified commands with geographic areas of responsibility are: United States Atlantic Command; United States Southern Command; United States European Command; United States Central Command; and United States Pacific Command. There are three other unified commands which have functional area responsibilities and are charged with the task of providing resources to the warfighting CINCs. They are: United States Special Operations Command; United States Transportation Command; and United States Space Command.

geographically divided between them, they are effectively responsible for all military operations, integrated or otherwise.[149] These theater commands, however, are predominately GPF organizations. At the time of this writing, all five were commanded by general officers with overwhelmingly conventional experience.[150] Most of the staff officers, including the operations officers have GPF backgrounds as well. Thus, at the "macro" level, by virtue of the fact that they occur in one of the five geographic regions, all integrated operations, both conventional and unconventional, are commanded by GPF organizations. Furthermore, regional CINCs have the doctrinal responsibility of designing strategy and campaign plans for operations within their theater.[151] This implies that they, as predominately GPF organizations, design the solutions to both conventional and UW problems.

It is perhaps unfair to characterize the regional unified commands as completely GPF organizations. There is a permanent SOF representation on the staff of each of these

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[149] This is not strictly true. Some unilateral special operations, conducted within a CINCs area of responsibility, are commanded at the USSOCOM or national level. For all practical purposes, however, all integrated operations are commanded by the CINC or one of his sub-component commanders.
[150] This assertion is based an examination of the biographies of all five theater geographic CINCs in command on 2 March, 1996.
[151] Joint Pub 1, p. 47.

commands. Each regional CINC has, as a component command, a Special Operations Command (SOC). This SOC is usually commanded by a brigadier general or a rear admiral and has the primary duties of advising the CINC on all matters pertaining to SOF and overseeing special operations within the command. Thus, there is, at least, SOF representation on the staff. It is interesting to note, however, that the other component commands (Army, Navy, and Air Force) are usually three or four star rank, as compared to the one star rank of the SOC. This may cause one to wonder about the SOC's ability to effect the decision making process of the organization. But, differences in rank aside, there is, at least, a permanent SOF presence at the unified command level. At the JTF level, where much of the actual planning and execution of operations occurs, there is seldom such a presence.

JTFs are usually organized or activated to perform a specific mission or conduct a campaign. For example, JTFs 180 and 190 were organized to conduct the recent intervention in Haiti. They are, however, like the regional unified commands, predominately GPF organizations. For example, JTFs are typically commanded by Army corps, Navy

fleets, or Marine Corps expeditionary forces. They can also be commanded by Army divisions or other smaller organizations, as was the case with JTF 190 in Haiti, which was commanded by the Army's 10th Mountain Division. SOF organizations are doctrinally capable of acting as JTF headquarters, but because of their generally smaller size and corresponding lack of staff capacity, this virtually never happens in integrated operations. Thus, integrated operations at the "micro" level, as well, are virtually always command by GPF organizations. Furthermore, unlike the regional unified commands, JTF headquarters, with the exception of Army corps, do not have a permanent SOF presence on their staffs.[152] Thus much of the planning for integrated operations, and consequently the development of campaign strategy, is done without the benefit of a habitual SOF influence.

Thus, it is clear that the current warfighting system of regional unified commands and JTFs perpetuates the conventional wisdom of subordinating SOF to GPF in integrated operations.

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[152] Army corps typically have a four man Special Operations Coordination Element or SOCCORD.

C. FIXING THE PROBLEM

There are several ways in which the current command structure could be altered to redress the subordination of SOF to GPF in integrated operations in UW. Actually, from a purely doctrinal standpoint, the command structure does not have to be altered at all. Regional CINCs could simply designate SOF organizations as JTF headquarters in UW operations. Under current joint doctrine, this is possible, it is just never done. This solution, while it is the simplest, would have some significant practical drawbacks, however. First, it would require that CINCs, who usually come from GPF backgrounds, free themselves of their organizational biases, recognize UW problems as such, and act accordingly. Based on the inability of general officers of similar rank and responsibility to be able to do so in Vietnam, however, this seems like a difficult proposition at best. Second, under the current command structure, there are few SOF organizations truly capable of acting as JTF headquarters. Each regional SOC could probably do it, but it is difficult to imagine a Special Forces Group of a SEAL Team as a JTF headquarters, especially in a large integrated

operation. They simply do not have the required staff capacity.

A more realistic approach to the problem, then, requires an alteration to the current command structure. There are several alternatives available, too many to list really. An approach similar to that taken by the Johnson Administration with respect to Robert Komer in Vietnam could be adopted. That is SOF officers could be placed as deputy commanders in regional unified commands where UW challenges are common, such as USSOUTHCOM. Other approaches, such as creating SOF divisions with headquarters large enough to act as JTF headquarters could be adopted as well. The solution which might be most appropriate, however, would be to establish USSOCOM as a warfighting headquarters. This would undoubtedly require a certain amount of institutional redesign, but the end product could create a significant amount of flexibility in the number and size of SOF headquarters available to act as JTF headquarters. It would also provide a unified command headquarters to run large scale UW operations like the US involvement in Vietnam. The difficulty with this alternative is that it would be hard to integrate with the regional CINCs. It would require

that the decision as to which command would have "jurisdiction" be made either at the JCS or National Command Authority level. It does, however, warrant further serious consideration. The important thing is that a solution be devised which allows for SOF organizations to command integrated operations in UW.

D. CLOSING THOUGHTS

The lesson that virtually every nation in the world learned from the 1991 Persian Gulf War is that the United States cannot be beaten on a conventional battlefield, at least not in the immediate future. Recent events in Chechnya and other regions within the former Soviet Union make it clear that not even the Russians could challenge the US in conventional, high intensity warfare. Relative to the United States, the other nations and organizations of the world operate from a position of relative weakness. This implies that the those who find it necessary to contend militarily with the US are very likely to choose an unconventional warfare strategy.

Since its experience in Vietnam, the US has shied away from UW.[153] During the Cold War, the emphasis in training

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[153] See Stephen Mariano, Peacekeepers Attend the Never-Again School, Masters Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 1995. See also the Weinberger Doctrine.

and force structure was on conventional, high intensity, warfare, and, given the threat, this was, perhaps, appropriate. In the security environment that has emerged since the end of the Cold War, however, the US can no longer afford to be shy when it comes to UW. It must be capable of operating effectively in both conventional and UW environments. A better understanding of the process of integration between SOF and GPF and the unique skills and talents each brings to the table may be a positive first-step towards achieving a greater UW capability.

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